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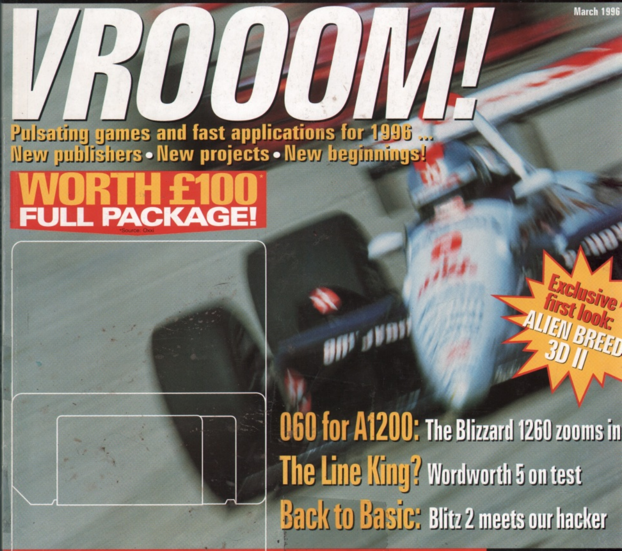
Extra!
Super video titling and presentation guide ... p25

AMIGA MAGAZINE

March 1996



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- Gloom Deluxe
- Airbus A320 II (zzzzz)
- Super Skidmarks Extra
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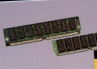

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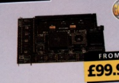

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CU AMIGA MAGAZINE • MARCH 1996

Features

VideoStage Pro 25

This month's incredibly versatile cover disk application is *VideoStage Pro*: turn your Amiga into a complete audio-visual presentation system. Our tutorial shows you how to get the most from this user-friendly package, with walk-through guides to creating a range of varied projects, from video titling to the weather forecast to interactive multimedia presentations!

Text
stage
12583
12583

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- **SSFII Turbo 47**
  Gametek have taken a stab at *Streetfighter* after US Gold's OK attempt. And this version kicks butt.
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  This is the basic *Gloom* with some fancy graphics and a better viewing mode really. Still one of the best though.
- **Super Skidmarks Extra 52**
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BLACK
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INC
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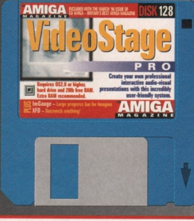
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A1200/A4000 and all 68020 Amigas with 2Mb RAM
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Go to hell! Play a hell level of Gloom Deluxe in this exclusive demo!!!
10 Custom levels for Worms
AMIGA MAGAZINE

VideoStage Pro 8
Whether you want to create interactive multimedia systems, add titles and credits to your videos, conduct flashy presentations to business associates or club members, or simply try your hand at doing the weather forecast, *VideoStage Pro* is the package for you. It's here in all its glory – the full program – on cover disk 128. Turn to page eight for more!

Gloom Deluxe 11
(and ten custom levels for Worms)
It doesn't get any better than this. On disk 129 we've got a demo of the latest version of that all time favourite – *Gloom*. It's looking good. And just when you thought we'd gone further than could be reasonably expected we've also included ten custom levels for *Worms*. Hurrah.

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PD Scene 82
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Version 3.09999843

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Editorial

There's still no sign of Amiga Technologies Q-Drive, but let's hope it arrives along in time for next month's big surprise: our second cover CD-ROM. The first one in November last year proved very popular and this time we're hoping to expand it to accommodate all those CD32 owners who were disappointed last time around. We've sent Mat away to a darkened room with a 1 Gigabyte hard drive and he's promised to come up with some serious goods.

But back to this month, and what a lovely bunch of goodies there are in the issue. In the games section the highlight has to be *XTreme Racing*, the best multi-player fun we've had in a long time. *Gloom Deluxe* is top stuff too, though I was hoping for a few more levels. In the technical section we've got Tony Horgan heaven: the Blizzard 1260, the first 060 board we've received for the A1200. Fast isn't the word (well, it is actually).

The closure of the Maidenhead Amiga Technologies office came as a disappointing shock (see news). Apparently due to failure of the Amiga to reach its sales targets during Christmas, three members of staff have also had to be made redundant. See page 120 for comment.

Alan Dykes, Editor

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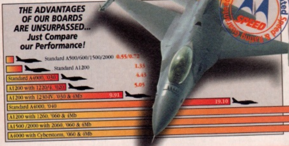

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Blizzard products have always been at the forefront of the Amiga accelerator market and we were the first to launch 68060 boards with the amazing performance they bring. Since that launch, there have been shortages of 68060 Motorola CPUs and production output has fluctuated. Although supplies of these chips were expected to be fully on line by now, Motorola cannot meet the demand. We are assured however that by the early part of 1996 Motorola will be in a position to fulfil the market's needs and hence, Blizzard product delays (which are beyond our control) should disappear. Until then you may well ask...

Should I be tempted to buy on '040 instead?

Well, when the Blizzard '060s can be **Two or Three** times as fast yet cost as little as 25% more, why buy an '040 which offers a far lower price to performance ratio! When we considered the possibility of producing an "interim '040", we decided it was not a product worthy of development. The facts are simple, if YOU want the **FASTEST** Amiga, a 68060 is the ONLY way. Maybe you should think about reserving a Blizzard 1260 or 2060 now - stocks are bound to be limited when the mighty 68060 returns! A small wait now, but an '040 will always keep your Amiga waiting longer!

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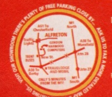

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PRO
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XFD – Decrunch anything!

VideoStage Pro requires at least 2Mb of free RAM in order to operate. See right for details.

ImGauge

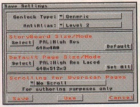
A common criticism squared at the excellent *Imagine* rendering package (cover-mounted on the January issue) is that the progress display is too small, it's a tiny display in the menu bar. *ImGauge* corrects this with a large resizable GUI progress bar you can use to monitor your renders. To use it, simply run it at the same time as *Imagine*. To install, just drag the *ImGauge* icon from the cover disk to wherever you want to install it.

XFD package

A lot of Amiga owners want to compress various programs with executable file compressors. However, this can lead to problems if you don't have the memory to decrunch etc. To make things easier for you we've put the excellent decruncher program XFD on this disk. You'll need to install from shell. Copy everything in the XFD/libs directory to your Workbench libs directory. Then copy everything from the XFD/c directory to your Workbench C: directory. To use XFD, try the following on a compressed file;

```
XFDdecrunch <file or directory>
```

and voila it's decompressed!



```
Save Settings
Genlock Type: Generic
AntiAlias: Level 2
StoryBoard Size/Mode
Select  PAL:High Res
        640x400                Default
Default Page Size/Mode
Select  PAL:High Res Laced
        640x512x3              Set All
Scrolling for Overscan Pages
        No Scroll
   For authoring purposes only
Save          Use          Cancel
```

▲ **VideoStage Pro defaults to an interlaced screen in order to fit everything into one display. However, this can be changed to a more comfortable flicker-free display by selecting the Save Settings option.**

VideoStage Pro is a very flexible program. It's primarily a visual presentation system that will be of particular interest to anyone involved in video work, but does not require any special video equipment to be extremely useful. There are many possible uses for the program, such as company presentations, in-store advertising, public information displays such as score boards at community events, interactive multimedia hyperbooks and of course video titling. With a bit of imagination you can probably think of plenty more too!

Ease of use

One of the best aspects of *VideoStage Pro* is its user-friendly approach. Most of the program works on a simple drag and drop system, based around a graphic storyboard made up from a series of pages. Each part of the storyboard holds the information for one page, along with the details of the transitions or wipes between the previous page and the current one. Most of the functions can be selected from icons and menus, so the only time you need to use the keyboard is when you enter some text on the screen!

Setting up

You can change the default interlaced screen to something a little more comfortable on the eyes. In order to do this choose the Save Settings option from the Project menu to bring up the options. Click on the Storyboard Size/Mode button and select the screen mode of your choice – we recommended High Res. This will allow you to access the whole screen by scrolling it up and down slightly whenever you move the mouse to the top or bottom. Click the Default Page Size/Mode button and make your selection as before.

RAM notes

VideoStage Pro requires at least 2Mb of free RAM. On Amigas with 2Mb of total RAM, some problems may occur due to memory consumption during boot-up. If memory problems occur, disable all extra drives and temporarily remove items from the WBStartup drawer or startup-sequence. Other boot sequences should be bypassed to free as much RAM as possible.

Now turn to page 25 in this issue where you'll find a series of walk-through guides to creating a range of different *VideoStage Pro* presentations. ■

Texture Studio

(cover disk 126 correction)

Last month we covermounted *Texture Studio* for *Imagine*. Unfortunately its settings files cannot be loaded directly into *Imagine*. However, there is a conversion tool on this month's cover disk 128, kindly supplied by G Hoyles, Upton on Severn.

First make sure you have arp.library in your Libs drawer. To use it from the Shell, copy it to your C directory, cd to your Texture Studio Settings drawer and enter:

```
ts-i source destination
```

where 'source' is the *Texture Studio* settings file and 'destination' is the new converted filename. Add .ATR to the destination filename and load it into *Imagine* from the Attributes requester. And that's it.

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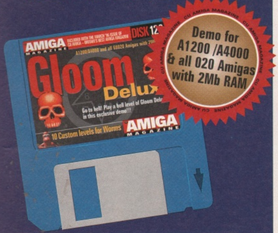
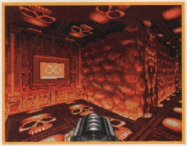
DISK 129

Gloom Deluxe


AMIGA MAGAZINE
DISK 129
Gloom
Delux
Go to hell! Play a hell level of Gloom Deluxe in this exclusive demo!!!
10 Custom levels for Worms
AMIGA MAGAZINE
CU AMIGA MAGAZINE

Demo for A1200 /A4000 & all 020 Amigas with 2Mb RAM

Gloom is back with a shiny new 1x1 pixel coat and check out the Worms levels courtesy of CU Amiga Magazine readers ...

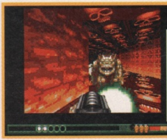


Fancy trying your hand at the hell level of *Gloom* in brilliant high resolution? Then you're in luck! This version of *Gloom* is optimised to run at 1x1 pixel resolution but this resolution can be adjusted upwards or downwards by pressing the esc button and using the cursors to select pixel height and pixel width. Pressing the esc button will toggle the various options. The screen size can also be adjusted to speed things up too, and using a combination of both you should be able to find a happy medium.

What you'll also find is that this level is very, very difficult. Even if you're used to *Gloom* it will take you by surprise. First pick up the two weapon boosters on the left and right hand sides of the room and then, in the alcove, press the fateful button. The wall opposite will rotate and a great horrible demon will rush at you. I tell you this because it's quite shocking when it happens and there's no harm being forewarned of this sort of thing.

If you have a graphics board or virtual i-glasses, you can select options in the machine configuration window which appears at the beginning which will allow you to use any of these, though bizarrely it was slower on the Mat's A3000's graphics board than in ECS!

Control is easy as pie (which is lucky 'cos the level is such a pig). Using the up, down, left and right cursors you can move forward, backwards, left and right. Alt is the fire button. If you finish the level within the first ten goes give yourself a pat on the back. In fact, if you finish it in the first 30 goes give yourself a pat on the back!



Worms Levels

On disk 129 there are 10 custom Worms levels. You will DEFINITELY need a copy of the original game to run these levels, OK. First though you will need to decompress them onto a blank, formatted disk. Follow these steps, swopping Disk 129 'GloomProg' when prompted:

1. Format a blank disk, naming it Custom.

2. Open the shell and type the following:

```
Copy GloomProg:c/UnLZX ram:
Copy GloomProg:WormsMaps.LZX ram:
```

Inserting Disk 129 (called GloomProg) when prompted.

3. Type the following in the shell:

```
CD Custom:
ram:UnLZX x ram:WormsMaps.LZX
```

Inserting the disk Custom when prompted.

The custom maps will not be extracted to your floppy disk. If you have *Worms* installed on a hard drive you will not have to create the floppy 'Custom'. Just place disk 129 in your drive and follow the instruction Step 2. Then type `CD HD1:Games/Worms/TWCustom` **(or whatever partition and directory you have the Worms drawer in), and type the same instruction as for floppy users. To load the custom maps into Worms go to the Records menu and click the 'next' button twice. This will bring up a two option menu allowing you to Change level disk or List custom levels. If you're working from floppy, clicking the Change option after inserting the Custom disk will log your ten new levels. Then pressing List will actually list them. Make a note of their names and when you Start a level press the right mouse button and enter one of these names. You will now be able to play on *Worms* custom screens like 'Fruity' or 'Pencils'. Enjoy.**

cover disks

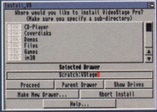
How to Load...

AMIGA MAGAZINE
DISK 128
VideoStage
PRO
Create your own professional interactive audio-visual presentations with this incredibly user-friendly system.
AMIGA MAGAZINE
PLUS ImGauge – Large progress bar for Imagine
XFD – Decrunch anything!

Cover disk 128

VideoStage Pro

VideoStage Pro must first be installed to your hard drive. Boot your hard drive and insert cover disk 128. Double click the disk icon then double click the Install_VS icon. You'll be asked to enter your name and your company or area. These details will appear each time you start the program. The installer will make an educated guess as to where you want to install *VideoStage*. If this is correct, then click on Proceed and you're off.


Install_VS
CD-Player
Coverdisks
Demos
Files
Games
im30
Proceed
Parent Drawer
Show Drives
Make New Drawer...
Abort Install
Help...

Where would you like to install VideoStage Pro?
(Make sure you specify a sub-directory)

Selected Drawer
Scratch:VStage

However, if you would like to re-direct the installer to another drive, partition or drawer, then select the desired location. In this case you will have to tell the installer to make a *VideoStage* drawer in your specified destination, so click on Make New Drawer and type `VStage`, then continue following the on-screen instructions.

Double click the *VStagePro* icon (found in the specified destination on your hard drive) to run the program.

xfdDecrunch:

This package allows you to decompress virtually any form of compressed file without having the original packer. Installation to floppy of hard drive is slightly tricky and will have to be performed in the AmigaDOS Shell. Type the following instructions into the shell with disk 128 in DF0:

```
Copy CU_128:XFD/libs libs: ALL
Copy CU_128:XFD/c c:
```

This will install all the libraries and executables to your boot drive. If booting from floppy, you'll have to make sure there is sufficient space free.

'To decompress a file, simply use the following command in the Shell:

```
xfdDecrunch <file>
```

The file will be decompressed and replaced with the uncompressed version. You might like to try using xfdList to fetch a list of a directory and identify any compressed programs. Use the following instruction in the shell to do so:

```
xfdList <directory>
```

Readers having problems running *Imagine* on a 3Mb free-mem system, might like to decompress the *Imagine* executable. *xfdDecrunch* has no problem with the task.

ImGauge

One of the minor problems with our January edition covermount *Imagine* package is that the progress display during a render is just a tiny little numeral in the tool bar. Enter *ImGauge*, on disk 128, to solve the problem if you have OS 3.0 and above. Usage is dead simple as all you need to do is run *ImGauge* before loading up *Imagine*, so that they are both running at the same time. A GUI will appear which can be resized from very small to very large. When Imagine starts a render, the gauge will show the progress. To install *ImGauge*, just load up workbench, insert disk 128 and drag the *ImGuage* icon to whichever drive you want to install it to. Easy.

AMIGA MAGAZINE
DISK 129
Gloom
Deluxe
Go to hell! Play a hell level of Gloom Deluxe in this exclusive demo!!!
10 Custom levels for Worms
AMIGA MAGAZINE

Cover disk 129

Gloom Deluxe

Gloom Deluxe is a bootable disk. Put it in your Amiga and re-start it. You will boot up into a setup screen, which allows you to configure it to your machine. Clicking on the C2P bar will allow you to choose a new chunky to planar routine. You can also select *Gloom* for Virtual i-glasses if you have them!

Worms Levels

The 10 worms levels are compressed on disk 129. To decompress and use them follow the instructions in the 'Worms Level' boxout on page 11.

IF YOUR DISK WON'T LOAD

We go to great trouble to ensure that the CU Amiga Magazine cover disks will work on common Amiga models. However, if you do experience problems follow this simple guide. We also vigorously virus check our cover disks on a branded virus checker. If some escape our attention we cannot assume responsibility for it.

1: Remove all unnecessary upgrades and peripherals, such as printers and modems. Some trapdoor expansions can also cause problems.

2: Follow the instructions on this and previous pages exactly.

3: If you still experience problems loading the disk call the PCWyse helpline on 01685 350 505 between the hours of 10am and 12noon Monday to Friday.

If they advise that the disk is faulty, fill in your details in the form below, and send this form, along with the faulty cover disk and a 28p stamped self addressed envelope to:

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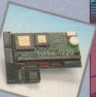
APOLLO A1200 ACCELERATORS

APOLLO 1220



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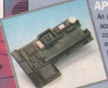

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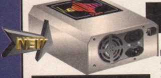

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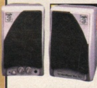

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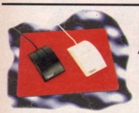

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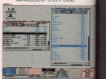

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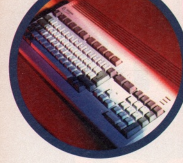
The April 1996 issue will feature the second CU Amiga Magazine Special Edition CD, packed with the software you want to see ... Don't miss out, order it from your newsagent now!

CD-ROM Special Edition 2 ... on sale March 14th



News

Maidenhead Closes Down Again!

Maidenhead must be jinxed as far as Amiga is concerned! Less than a year after Commodore UK closed its doors and only six months after being set up, the Maidenhead office of Amiga Technologies has closed down. The announcement came into effect on the 31 January 1996.

Set up to provide development support, sales and marketing, the success of the UK branch was always likely to be closely tied to the sales performance of the Amiga before and during Christmas 1995 and, according to industry sources, this has fallen far short of expectations.

Amiga Technologies UK will continue to be represented by staff at Escom UK headquarters in Stansted, Cambridgeshire, but the closure has lead to three redundancies, including that of Jonathon Anderson, Joint General Manager. Jonathon was "disappointed", but "understood the situation" and all staff had apparently been informed of the redundancies before Christmas by Amiga Technologies' Managing Director Petro Tyschtchenko.

Despite initial worries that the closure of the office might mean a drastic cutting back of Amiga Technologies' commitment to the UK market, sources have stated that this is not the case, and the announcement that the World Of Amiga show is indeed taking place, with sponsorship from the German organisation has allayed worries for the time being.

At the moment it is not clear what new direction AT intend taking in marketing the Amiga in Britain, but the alleged poor sales results must mean that something has to happen soon. It's also not clear what sort of customer support and back-up will be supplied from the Stansted office.

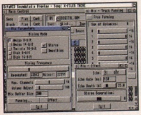
Johnathan Anderson: "Disappointed".

John Smith is staying on in the new Stansted office as General Manager, and will retain overall control of Sales in the UK for all Amiga products and Virtual i-glasses. We'll have a full update next month. ■

New OctaMED

OctaMED SoundStudio V1 is 'nearly completed' according to RBF Software. *SoundStudio* aims to take the power of *OctaMED* and bring it right up to date by adding support for 16-bit sound cards and many features demanded by musicians frustrated by the traditional Tracker format.

Among the new features is the ability to play up to 64 tracks of Amiga samples simultaneously (but don't expect perfect sound quality). A completely new notation editor has been developed as an alternative to the alphanumeric tracker display, which will also be present.



Due to the new sample replay routines, there will be no maximum size limit for samples other than the total available RAM. Direct to hard drive recording, full Toccata support, extra MIDI commands and a 200 page manual are also promised.

Registered users of *OctaMED 6* are eligible for a discount when upgrading. Look out for the full in-depth review in next month's CU Amiga Magazine.

OctaMED users with Internet access can now hook up to an official World Wide Web site for lots of *OctaMED* info and downloads. The address is as follows: http://www.compulink.co.uk/~octamed/

For more more information you can contact RBF Software at
169 Dale Valley Road,
Southampton, SO1 6QX.
Tel/fax: 01703 785 680.

Amiga-Link Price Drop

The networking system Amiga-Link featured in the February issue's networking article has been reduced in price from $299 (US) to $275 (US).

Amiga-Link is available from AmiTrix Development, 5312 - 47 Street, Beaumont, Alberta, T4X 1H9, Canada. If you would like some more information you can phone or fax them on (001 from UK) 403 929 8459.

World Of Amiga Confirmed

The World of Amiga show has been finally confirmed. It will run over the 13th and 14th of April in the Novotel, Hammersmith, London. This confirmation follows three changes of date for the show so far. The new show coincides with the Spring European Computer Trade Show, which starts on the 14th in neighbouring Earls Court.

Whether the timing is purely coincidental or not it should give AT an opportunity to talk at first hand with the games software industry at their most important UK show. We hope to see you all there supporting the Amiga.

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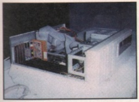
World Of Amiga: Toronto

The Wonder Computers World Of Amiga Show in Toronto was a major event (*writes Jason Compton*), three days in the Toronto International Centre, with dozens of exhibitors, thousands of attendees and a smattering of celebrities it made history. So, what was there to do and see?

Meet the man, of course. None other than Petro Tyschtshenko, head of Amiga Technologies. He was on-hand for a day and a half and gave the keynote address, in which he informed the ladies and gentlemen of the audience of AT's plans for a North American re-launch with the upcoming A1200+ and talked about the Amiga's future with Motorola's PowerPC chip. Petro was also available for handshakes and conversation, provided you stood in line, at the SMG booth, where the North American distributors of Amiga machines had the A4000T, A1200, and A1438S monitor on display. There was even a spare A4000T lying on its side with the case taken off for nosy users and journalists to poke around in.

Facing the 4000T was MacroSystem's Draco, being shown off by distributors NoahJi's. While the Draco is billed as a non-linear editing computer with Amiga emulation, rather than as an 'Amiga clone', it seems clear that the Draco, having beaten the 4000T to market with a built-in 060, may be a serious competitor for professional market 4000T sales. Capable of absolutely incredible real-time and rendered video effects, the Draco has to be seen to be believed.

▲ Draco System's Sales Manager Bohus Blahut busily doing some work.



▲ A picture of the Amiga Technologies A4000T, up close and looking wirey.

Two big Amiga players from Germany represented themselves directly. The first, Village Tronic, showed off the official Amiga Technologies-approved AmigaOS 3.1 and AmiTCP 4 and a host of their other products including their time-proven Zorro-II graphics card, the Picasso II. Plans were revealed at the show to have a new, Zorro-III Picasso IV on the market by mid-1996.

The second, Phase5, drew an endless stream of gawkers to the tall glass case housing the recent items from the hardware developer. More interesting than the Blizzard, CyberStorm and CyberVision cards lying there was the engineering prototype of the PowerUP PowerPC 604 upgrade card for the Amiga 4000.

Wonder Computers organised and put on the World Of Amiga, and as such their presence could be seen in large numbers. Entering patrons couldn't help but notice the centrally-located Wonder Retail area with gobs of Amiga products piled high off the tables and the huge-screen TV with a *Scala*-updated listing of the show's sponsors and exhibitors. Across the hall was the WCi Distribution table, offering dealers and manufacturers a chance to connect with each other in North America.

For those who are already deeply entrenched in said market, they needed to look no farther than MicroScribe. The device, a joint effort between MicroScribe and Immersion Corporations, is a pen mounted to a serious looking piece of red steel. The pen "digitises" real-world 3D objects into *LightWave* objects on an Amiga or PC as the user touches the pen to points indicated by a grid (to be drawn on the object prior to digitisation.) The price is hefty, but the capabilities are simply amazing, and the potential for the product is staggering.

DKB, one of the few American Amiga hardware developers that still do general-interest products, made the journey to promote their new WildFire A2000 68060 accelerator board as well as to hype up their upcoming multi-IO and SCSI hardcard products. Promised for the future are WildFire A3000, A4000, and most likely A1200 units, bringing the entire line of recent Amigas up to the best Motorola has to offer 680x0 users.

Phantom Development, an American Amiga software publisher looking to capture several neglected markets, including development tools for GUI building and text editors, brought their product line and upcoming products for the people to see. Still promising, and still incomplete, the upcoming Hell Pigs action/adventure game demo was being shown. Hopefully, Croatian developers Classica will put the finishing touches on the game in short order so Phantom can unleash it to the world.

In addition to developers, several dealers came to offer their wares to the buying public. National Amiga, a firm which does the vast majority of its business on the World Wide Web, shared a booth with developer and retailer PreSpect Technology, developers of the MultiFace IV serial/parallel card for Zorro-equipped Amigas. Zipperware made the trip from America's Northwest, and Legendary Design was introducing some of its own in-house products as well as blowing out old Psygnosis titles for as little as $1 apiece.

It was a long, hard road to get a large-scale Amiga show in North America after Commodore gave up the ghost. But thanks to dozens of exhibitors and thousands of attendees, WOA Toronto '95 was a great success. Don't feel too bad if you missed it – plans are underway for WOA Vancouver '96, in June. ■

▲ Wonder's Western Regional Manager Tim McGuire (centre) presides over the Wonder retail booth.

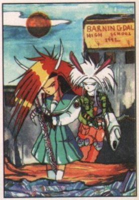
▲ Keynes Emeruwa and Trevor Kidd keep an eye on Wonder's WCi Distribution area.

Naughty Schoolgirl

The UK's only japanese-style cartoon magazine publisher, Gaijin Press Dojinshi, has announced that it intends to do an animated cartoon based around their main magazine character, Ariel High School Devil-Girl, using the Amiga.

According to Josh 'Oni' Clarke, the Manga style cartoon artwork used for the magazines is becoming increasingly popular in the UK and he hopes that the animation will help this along.

Anyone interested in the genre or the animation should contact him at Gaijin Press, 2 Birkdale Drive, Immingham, Grimsby DN40 2LB.



Matt Broughton's

Games in view

Another month, another page full of news courtesy of the games meister from hell. Incidentally, that's not his real hair in the picture, it's a plastic mould. Thank you.

Mornin'. Yes it's me. No, I'm not a Games Animal without any hair and a hanky covering over my increasingly shiny spam, I'm just a man with a man's desires and needs. Er, anyway ... what say we get this show on the road?

Acclaim Entertainment isn't a name which has been connected with the Amiga games scene recently, but thanks to a few recent acquisitions, will be in your thoughts very shortly. In fact, if you're not already sitting down, I suggest you ready yourself, because there are THREE games arriving on the good ship Acclaim any day now (yes, incredible, non?)

First up is **Domark**'s **Total Football** – a product that's been flapping around for some while, but has been delayed and delayed thanks to some annoying bugs that no-one could kill. No release date has been confirmed as yet, but nice Mr Simon Smith-Wright from Acclaim reckons that we should see something within the next three months.

The second game from the Acclaimers is the excellent basketball romp, **NBA Jam: Tournament Edition**. Having just enjoyed a good innings on 16-bit consoles and the Sony PlayStation, this has proved problematic to convert, but with top developers Dome on the case, Acclaim are hoping to have something to see jolly damn soon indeed. For those of you not familiar with this title, it's one of the more simple basketball games around – with a two-on-two structure – and it's not so worried about realism as it is with having fun (you remember 'fun' don't you?) Features include power-up icons on-court accessing enormous flaming balls (yes, chuckle chortle, etc) speed-ups, and all manner of point bonuses to annoy your opponent just when he thought he had you beaten.

And finally from Acclaim (and here's some REAL news) it's **Putty Squad**. It's true! Having first appeared in the Amiga press about a year or so ago, this excellent platform game from System 3 has finally found a way out into the light, and should be out, if not by the end of February, then certainly by March (and before you ask, yes that is March 1996). Acclaim managed to pick up this title at the end of the year when System 3 (bloody brilliant developers that they are) were struggling with distribution. So should we expect to see much more of Acclaim this year? Well no, not really. It appears that those groovy funksters aren't going out of their way to get back into the Amiga market, but what with all the Escom news going on last year, coupled with the fact that they thought all these titles were pretty sexy, they certainly won't be running away from nice distribution deals such as these.

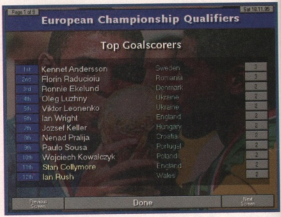
Well we haven't heard from **Flair** for a while, but they're back on the scene, touting a new game called **Double Agents**. Details are a bit thin at the moment (i.e. their nice man forgot to send my the fax he promised!) but I'm sure I'll find out more soon. The only thing I know is that it's due for a March release.

As for whether more Amiga products will be arriving on the Flair Express in the near future, well ... in the words of Flair's main man, Colin, "Pass!". A man of few words, our Colin. Anyway, apparently it all depends on the retailers and distributors. Due to the increasing shortage of shelf space in games shops, it's proving very hard to get products through the door and into the punters' bedrooms. Another problem for such companies as far as making money goes (which, after all, is what finances future developments) is that, while countries like Germany have always proved very important market places for Flair, now that those crazy, sausage-chewing loons seem to be easing up on the Amiga front, well ... let's just say that future products look a bit unlikely at the mo'. Still, you never know.

Another 'simply smashing' bit of news for Amiga gamers this month comes from **Empire Interactive**, where, following on from last month's football one they are putting together more compilations.

So there you are folks, some OK news but some pretty damn good news as well. And just to gloat in your faces, I'm off to New York again tomorrow morning, so you can expect a new photograph of my smug mug next month. Nothing to do with the Amiga games scene I know, but hey, I just enjoy annoying you. So have fun, and hell, why not have a look at the new HMV charts – they're just so sensuous. Be seeing you ...■

Matt Broughton



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Sat 18.11.95

European Championship Qualifiers

Top Goalscorers

1st	Kennet Andersson	Sweden	3
2nd	Florin Raducioiu	Romania	3
3rd	Ronnie Ekelund	Denmark	2
4th	Oleg Luzhny	Ukraine	2
5th	Viktor Leonenko	Ukraine	2
6th	Ian Wright	England	2
7th	Jozsef Keller	Hungary	2
8th	Nenad Pralija	Croatia	2
9th	Paulo Sousa	Portugal	2
10th	Wojciech Kowalczyk	Poland	2
11th	Stan Collymore	England	2
12th	Ian Rush	Wales	2

▲ Originally in the hands of Domark, Total Football will now be handled by Acclaim.

HMV CHART...
Amiga Top Games

No	TITLE	PUBLISHER
1	Worms	Ocean
2	Player Manager 2	Virgin
3	Alien Breed 3D	Ocean
4	Soccer Stars 96	Empire
5	Sensible Golf	Virgin
6	Sensi World of Soccer 95/96	Virgin
7	Premier Manager 3: Multi-Edit	Gremlin
8	Civilization	Digital
9	Tactical Manager	Ocean
10	Ultimate Soccer Manager	Sierra

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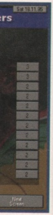

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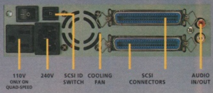

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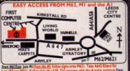

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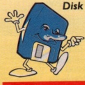

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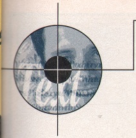
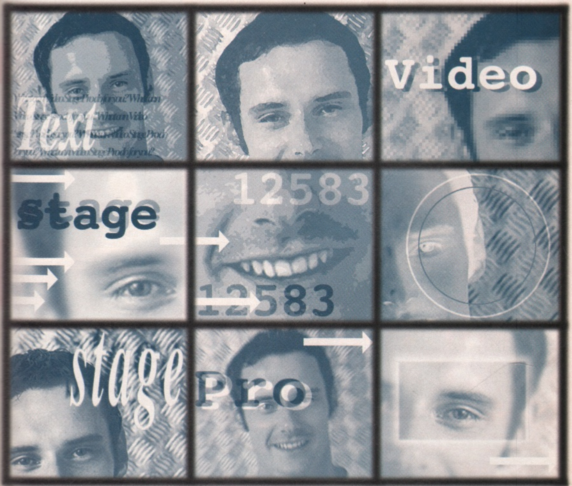
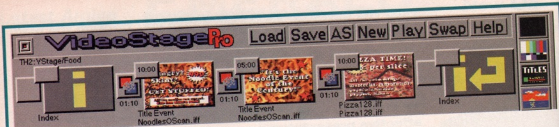


Over the next four pages we'll take you through the main functions and key features of this user-friendly visual presentation system. Turn to the latter part of this feature for a reference guide to the control panels. For now set up according to the instructions on pages 9 and 12 and have a go at creating some of these simple but effective presentations.

VideoStage Pro





Norman's Noodles

Here's an example of a non-interactive sequence that could be displayed in a prominent place and left to loop all day, just the job for food stalls at exhibitions, public gatherings and cafés. In this case it's advertising a couple of special offers on noodles and pizzas. Let's take a look at how it was set up.

① As this needed to loop round from start to finish, the first thing to do was insert an index marker as the first event. The index acts as a key point to which you can move with a Return event inserted later on in the sequence. Move to the right side of the screen and drag the index icon (the yellow letter 'i') up to the first position in the storyboard. You'll notice that each event box in the story board has two smaller boxes in the top left corner. These are used for controlling the amount of time the page is visible, and the type of wipe or fade transition. As the index does nothing you can see, these boxes will remain blank for this event.

② For the next event we want to display some text and logos over a backdrop picture. Drag the Graphic Event icon (a small picture of a sunset scene) from the right hand edge onto the event slot to the right of the index you previously inserted. Now click on the blue square that's appeared, then select Pick IFF File. You can now select an IFF picture to load in as your backdrop. Choose anything suitable that you may have on your hard drive. A cameo of the backdrop will replace the blue square.

③ Now select AddText/Objects. This brings you to the page construction section, which is made up of two displays. The main display is the page that you're working on. Overlaid onto that is a control panel running along the bottom. Click the right mouse button to remove the control panel and see the page in full and once more to bring it back again.

Along the bottom of the panel you'll notice ten numbered buttons marked Storyboard, Text, Objects, Brushes, Buttons, Arrange, Actors, Backdrops, Redraw and Preview. These are used to select different areas of the page construction section. At the moment you should be in the Text section, so the Text button should be ghosted out as you can't move the area you are already in.

④ Type some text and you should see it appear at the top of the screen. If it's difficult to read, try changing the main text colour by clicking on the coloured box above the Objects button. The available colours will be limited to those in the palette of your backdrop picture. See the final page of this feature for a tip to get around this problem. To select another font or change the size or style of the current font, click the Edit Font button. *VideoStage* automatically scans the Fonts drawer of your hard drive and adds them to its own list. You'll see the name of the current font displayed next to the Text Font label. Click on this and scroll through the list to choose another. Use the extended menu selection to choose the font size, or enter a new size in the box to the right. Click on OK when you've got the one you want. Now enter your text and position it using the justification buttons. You can position it anywhere on the screen using the Arrange section but we'll come to that in a minute.

⑤ The next thing to do is add some of those flashes. Click on the Objects button from the list along the bottom or press F3 to do the same thing (each of these ten sections can be accessed from the corresponding function keys). You'll see a sequence of small shapes along the top of this control panel. These are very handy pre-set shapes that can be dropped onto your page, coloured, scaled and skewed to meet your demands.

For now try clicking on the third shape from the left. Now move to any part of the picture and drag out a rectangle with the mouse. The flash will be drawn to fit the size of the box you've just created. The box will be visible at the moment and you can resize it by dragging the handles around the edges and move the whole thing by dragging the handle in the middle. Colours and shadows can be altered in the same way as text.

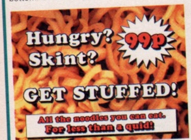
⑥ Return the the Text section (F2) and enter some text that you want to overlay on the flash logo.

⑦ Finally we get to arrange all the components of the page, so select the Arrange control panel (F6). You are now free to drag all of the text and shapes around the page until you get it looking nice and neat. To move more than one item at the same time you need to multi-select the objects as you would when using Workbench, so hold down the Shift key and click on all the objects you want to move, then drag them around with the Shift key still held down.

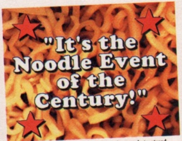
⑧ Press F1 to Return to the storyboard. You can now set up the next few pages in the same way, by dragging either the Title or Graphic Event icon onto the next available storyboard slot. Both icons lead to the same thing, but one asks you to define the backdrop first while the other takes you straight to the text editor section.

⑨ Insert the Index Return icon at the end of your sequence.

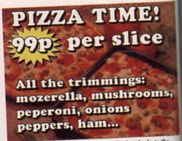
⑩ Save your sequence to your hard drive and then click on Play to watch it through.



▲ VideoStage Pro is full of handy tricks for creating striking presentations like these in a matter of minutes.



▲ The combination of DTP-style control over fonts and structured graphics with flashy video effects is a winner.



▲ Knocking up a sequence like this is child's play, thanks to the abundance of automatic formatting features and push-button action.

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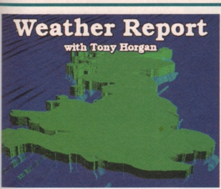
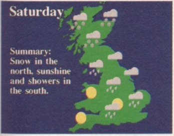
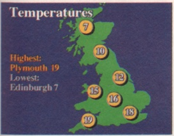


▲ Should you ever get the urge to present the weather forecast, VideoStage Pro will fulfil your requirements. You can even use a fancy 3D animated intro sequence!



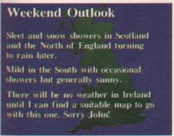
Summary:
Snow in the north, sunshine and showers in the south.

▲ The weather symbols are IFF brushes, turned into VideoStage 'actors' which can fly across the screen in a number of ways.



Highest:
Plymouth 19
Lowest:
Edinburgh 7

▲ Combining the structured drawing tools with the text entry system can lead to neat results, like these temperature readings.


Weekend Outlook

Sleet and snow showers in Scotland and the North of England turning to rain later.

Mild in the South with occasional showers but generally sunny.

There will be no weather in Ireland until I can find a suitable map to go with this one. Sorry John!

▲ This dimmed effect could be simulated by overlaying a 50% transparent box over the backdrop.

The Weather Forecast

VideoStage works well when combined with other software you may have on your Amiga. For example, this weather report sequence combines 3D ray-traced graphics (created with *Imagine*) with hand drawn symbols (made with *DPaint*) and *VideoStage*'s own titles and wipe effects, resulting in a very slick broadcast-quality presentation. You may not have much call to present the weather forecast, but the same procedures can be applied to many different applications. The main point being demonstrated here is *VideoStage*'s brush handling features. Here's how it was put together.

❶ Before the main weather forecast there needs to be an introduction screen. The main image was rendered in *Imagine*, using the 'BRITISILE' object that was included with February 1995's issue of CU Amiga Magazine. The sea was a flat plane covered in a texture called Ripples. You could go one stage further than this and render an entire animation, which of course would be even more impressive and eye-catching.

Animations can be inserted by dragging a Graphic Event icon onto the storyboard, then selecting an 'anim' file instead of an IFF picture. You can then alter a few of the animation settings to suit the timing and speed that you require. The title text was added over the top of the backdrop using the normal text tools, as described in the previous example.

❷ Now we get to the meat of the sequence. The first of the main map screens is a combination of three elements: a backdrop, some text and some IFF brushes. The backdrop was also rendered with Imagine but this time stripped of any textures and complex lighting effects for the sake of clarity, although the slight 3D look was retained just to raise it from the screen a little.

However, it's the brushes that are the main feature as far as this tutorial is concerned. The brushes are all the weather symbols that are placed over the map. These were drawn with *Deluxe Paint*, clipped and saved out as brushes and then loaded into *VideoStage* from the Brushes section.

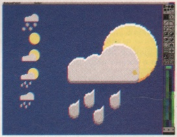
❸ The best way to use brushes is to load them all into the brush bank, accessed with the F4 key. The brush bank is the row of squares along the top of the brush control panel. To load a new brush, click on an empty slot in the bank, and select the brush from the file requester. Continue this process until you've loaded all the brushes you think you will need. In order to reserve some colours for the brushes the map was rendered in 128 colours, then loaded into a 256 colour screen in *DPaint*, which left another 128 colours free for painting the symbols.

❹ How about some animation then? *VideoStage* is very good at introducing titles and graphics onto the screen. For example, this page could start with a blank map, and the weather symbols could then float in from the top right corner, pop up from the bottom, rain down from the top or make any one of a number of dynamic entrances. Jump to the Actors section to have a go at this by pressing F7.

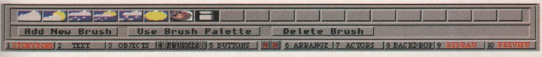
❺ Select a number of symbols by clicking on them. Now click on any of the motion icons from the Actors control panel. Each icon represents a different type of entrance, indicated by the arrow markings on each button. Click on the Preview button or press F10 to see how the chosen motion path will look.

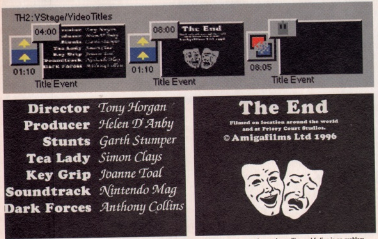
❻ A similar method was used to create the second page displaying the maximum temperatures. The circles were drawn from the Objects section and the numbers were placed using normal text techniques. In contrast to the sweeping entrances of the weather symbols in the previous page, these temperature readings would look neat if they all faded up from the blank map at the same time. To achieve this you need to enter the Arrange control panel (F6) and select all the temperature logos. Now click on the Group button to define them all as one group. Move back to the Actors section and select one of the wipes from the far right panel, then Preview to check everything is OK.

❼ Finally there's the outlook for the rest of the rest of the weekend. To divert attention from the backdrop picture to the main text over the top, a different version of the map image was used for this screen. The backdrop was darkened using image processing software.



▲ DPaint is ideal for creating customised brushes for use as moving sprites in your presentations.





Director *Tony Horgan*
Producer *Helen D'Anby*
Stunts *Garth Stumper*
Tea Lady *Simon Clays*
Key Grip *Joanne Toal*
Soundtrack *Nintendo Mag*
Dark Forces *Anthony Collins*

The End
Filmed on location around the world
and at Priory Court Studios.
© Amigafilms Ltd 1996

▲ Video titling is handled with ease. The special 'credit centered' justification mode is excellent, and smooth scrolling and fading is no problem.

Video titling

Video titling is the most obvious use for a program such as *VideoStage Pro*, and in this area it excels with some unique features not offered by any other Amiga titling systems. Whether you want to add rolling credits at the start and end of your videos or you need to overlay captions, the Text and Transition sections are the main ports of call.

Film credits

Classic style film credits are incredibly simple to put together. The short example here displays a single screen of credits text which scrolls onto the screen from below. It waits there for a few seconds before being pushed off the top of the display by the final screen that also scrolls up from the bottom. After another short wait for the viewer to read the final page, it fades to black in super-smooth fashion, especially on an AGA Amiga.

You'll notice that the first page of text is split into two sections: job titles on the left and names on the right, perfectly centred with a different font for each side. This is achieved with a special justification mode called 'credit centred'.

The justification gadgets are found on the Text control panel above the Objects and Brushes buttons. 'Credit centred' justification is selected with third gadget from the left. Normal justification will align the text to either side of the screen or centre it. However, credit centred mode aligns the first part of your text with the centre of the screen. After you've pressed the Tab key it switches to an alternative font and aligns the following text to the centre mark. To define the second font, click on the button marked Left beneath the Edit Font button. It will change to read Right and you can then set the alternative font accordingly.

Smooth scrolling

Now that you've got your first page of credits, you'll need to tell it to scroll up onto the screen. Click on the small box to the left of the credits page on the storyboard. This will bring up the Transitions window, from which you can choose all kinds of fancy wipes and fades. In this case you want a smooth vertical scroll from bottom to top, so click the icon at the top left corner of the Scrolls section (it's marked with two arrows pointing upwards). The animated preview window below this panel shows you what to expect with a little explanatory text. To try it out quickly, click on the Preview button. The speed of the transition can be altered by dragging the slider at the top of the window, although the default settings usually look best.

Once you've got the hang of it you can add as many subsequent pages as you need, adding logos in the form of IFF brushes to round it all off.

As an added extra and a nice finishing touch you could even tailor off your credits with a nice little animation, as is currently popular with independent production companies.

Making Buttons

Interactive presentations have many uses, from pure entertainment to education and information applications. *VideoStage Pro* uses buttons to allow the user to decide what will happen next. Buttons are very easy to set up and hardly need any explanation, but here's a brief introduction to get you started.

① To make a button, first set up a simple page in the normal way. This can include text, graphics or both. Move to the Buttons control panel and select Make Hot Button. Once you've done this, drag out a rectangle on the screen to lay down the button.

② Next you need to add a text label to the button. Enter the text into the text box on the control panel, not onto the button itself. Alternatively you could use an IFF brush to label the button ...

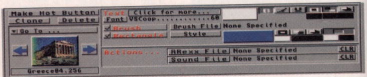
③ To assign a brush to the button, click on the Brush File button and select one from your hard drive.

④ Buttons can be either solid, transparent or 50% transparent. You can alter these settings by clicking on the Style button, which also allows you to alter the shadow and outline parameters.

⑤ Once you've made the button you need to define its function. This is a simple matter of clicking on the button that's initially marked 'No Destination', and changing it so that the button jumps to the desired page.

You can skip through the available pages with the left and right arrows.

Tourist Information
Click for more...



Text: Click for more...
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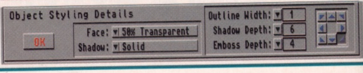
☑ Brush
☑ Rectangle
Brush File: None Specified
Greece04.256
ARexx File: None Specified
Sound File: None Specified



Object Styling Details
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Hints and tips

To get the most from *VideoStage Pro* it's important to understand how it handles your presentations. When you've finished a presentation and saved it out, you might notice that the saved file is very small, even though you may have used many high resolution images and lots of fancy animated cuts and fades. This is because only the script data is saved. In other words, the graphics and sounds are not included in the *VideoStage* file, and the fancy wipes are generated in real time, rather than pre-rendered and saved as animations. This means that when you come to replay the presentation at a later date it's essential that you have all the graphics and sound files in exactly the same place on your hard drive, otherwise *VideoStage* will not be able to find them.

Save on memory

On a different subject, you might have found that sometimes when you add items to a backdrop, the backdrop picture has eaten all of the colours in your palette, leaving you with no contrasting colours for your text, buttons and objects. In this case, the best solution is to prepare the page first without the backdrop and then load it in once you've got the rest of the elements in place.

Memory problems can occur on Amigas with low RAM capacity. The simplest way to avoid such errors is to use lower resolution pictures with fewer colours. You may also be told that you have run out of memory when the program is half way through a wipe or fade, even though your Workbench RAM readout says you have plenty. Some *VideoStage Pro* wipes require a large chunk of continuous memory, so in these cases try selecting an alternative wipe from a different section (a fade instead of a scroll for example).

Unexpected events

Occasionally *VideoStage* does some strange things. For example, sometimes during the construction of a page you may find the control panel has shifted up the screen slightly and you can't reach the bottom strip of buttons with the mouse. Fortunately in this case you can use the function keys instead to move to any of the other control panels.

You might have noticed the lack of a screen cycle gadget on the *VideoStage* control panel. However, the program multitasks with Workbench and anything else you may have running. You can flip between all the available screens using the normal hot key combination of Left Amiga and M.

On the subject of audio events, you may well have trouble playing IFF samples without them looping. *VideoStage Pro* likes to loop all samples, which can be a problem if you only need the sound to play once. Although this doesn't seem to be the official solution (there may be a far simpler way around it) you can use the Timeline window to fix it. The sample's duration is displayed in the audio event selector box. Make a note of this and adjust the audio event bar in the Timeline so that it extends an equal amount. *VideoStage* also supports *AudioMaster IV* Sequence files. These are similar to IFF samples, but they can contain a sequence of loops within the main sample, so a short loop can be looped at a variety of points to create a larger and more complex sound. *Soundtracker* and *ProTracker* modules are also supported, although unfortunately there's no direct *OctaMED* module replay function.

Graduated backdrops can be created from within *VideoStage Pro*, even if you're working on a screen with a very low number of colours, as you may be if speed or low memory consumption was a priority. From the Backdrop control panel select Algorithmic, then choose which type of graduation you want (top to bottom, side to side etc). You can also pick the colours that you want the graduation to fade from and to. If you are working on a low-colour screen, such as an eight colour display, the program will automatically generate the stippling or dithering effect, which is normally good enough if you have a high resolution screen.

Just like a DTP program, *VideoStage* can import text files to save you the bother of typing out your titles from within the program. It's often a lot easier to prepare and spell-check your text in a word processor or text editor than to enter everything straight onto the screen, which can be rather slow if you are using large fonts and lots of fancy style enhancements such as shadows and anti-aliasing. Click on the disk icon from the Text control panel to select the text file you want to import. ■

Tony Horgan

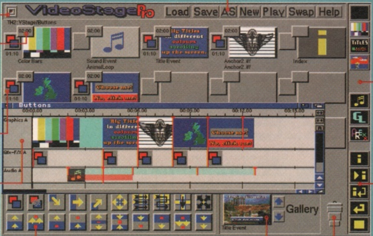
Next month

We'll dig a bit deeper into the more advanced functions of VideoStage Pro in next month's issue of CU Amiga Magazine, but until then, keep exploring and experimenting!

General Operation

Now that you've had a go with most of the main functions of *VideoStage Pro*, here's a guided tour of the storyboard control panel.

SCRIPT CONTROLS: basic functions are performed on your scripts (storyboards) from these buttons.



CLOSE GADGET: use this to quit VideoStage Pro.

PAGE DURATION: length of time the page will remain on screen before the next is shown. When this box shows a picture of a mouse, the page will wait for a mouse click before proceeding.

WIPE: this shows a cameo representation of the wipe or fade, along with its duration.

TIME LINE: the whole presentation can be viewed from the time line display, which helps synchronise sound and graphic events.

GENERAL EVENTS: these are the basic event icons as follows running from top to bottom, blank screen, colour bar test page, title event, graphic event, audio event, genlock event and ARexx event.

CONTROL EVENTS: these page icons are used to define loops and return points within your presentations.

WIPES: a small selection of common wipes and fades are left out on the main screen for quick and easy access. The full range of wipes can be accessed by clicking on the wipe icon of any page (see above left).

GALLERY: the gallery is used as a temporary storage space for spare pages. Many pages can be held here at once and selected using the up and down arrows.

TRASHCAN: drag pages here to delete them.

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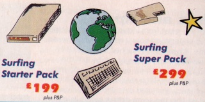

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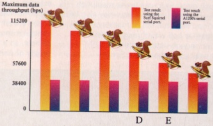
- ★ Simple installation.

How much faster is the Surf Squirrel?



Bars A,B and C are the maximum transfer rates obtained when downloading an ASCII, Database and Graphic file respectively, using a V34/VFC modem. Bars E,F and G are the maximum transfer rates obtained when downloading an ASCII, Database and Graphic file respectively, using a V32bis modem.

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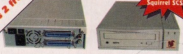

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Software '96

With big name software companies disappearing from the Amiga market at an alarming rate, things should look bleak but they're better than you might think ...

You may think you've seen it all before: the destruction of a computer brand by starving it of its lifeblood, software. But this time it's different. The Amiga has the largest installed user base of any home computer and, despite all the turmoil surrounding the Commodore collapse and the subsequent takeover by Escom, the machine still sells and Amiga Technologies are in the process of developing a whole new generation of Amigas.

More importantly though, the Amiga has not been outdated yet. Workbench is still the best operating system around (if you've tried multi tasking with a Mac or even using Windows '95 you'll know what I mean) and with upgrade processor boards it can still cut the mustard in terms of speed. So top quality, fast software can be produced for it, and it can sell.

All you have to do is look at the current crop of top games, *Breathless* (reviewed last month), *XTreme Racing* (reviewed on page 42) and *Alien Breed 3D II: The Killing Grounds* (previewed on page 38), or serious packages like *LightWave, Imagine, Wordworth, Final Writer* and *Fina Calc* to see what the potential is. But even titles like this are not selling what they should do, and in certain cases not selling

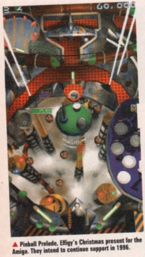
New Developers ...

Effigy Software

Ian Jenkins from Effigy Software surprised us by sending a 21st Century beating pinball game in for review before Christmas. *Pinball Prelude* was the first product from this Lincolnshire based company and though delayed, it goes into distribution nationwide on February 28th, through distribution specialists Pinnacle. What is his outlook for games this year? "We made a promise last year to continue supporting the Amiga throughout 1996, and I intend to keep this promise ... we now have a non-AGA version of *Pinball Prelude* and the first data disk, *Egypt Table*, is already finished and we're working on more."

What about other products? "I like to think that Effigy is characterised by bringing out unusual or interesting products. You've seen *Pinball Prelude*? Well, we feel that there is a tendency to bring out boring games, just variations on the same old theme. We don't intend to fall into this trap. We have two other products lined up for the first half of the year. One is on the technical side, a music software package called *Sound Multiplexer* and the other is a game which will be cartoon style but with a difference: it'll have both 2D and 3D modes".

That sounds very unusual, what style of game is it going to be? "Well I'm not letting any secrets out at this stage", replied Ian, "but the 2D mode will be Disneyesque and the 3D mode Doomesque ... in a cartoon sort of way". What about later on in the year? "We've got more products planned for closer to Christmas, including a puzzle game, but I'll let you in on these when the time comes."



▲ Pinball Prelude, Effigy's Christmas present for the Amiga. They intend to continue support in 1996.

▲ Alex Amsel, programmer of XTreme Racing: Will continue to support the Amiga if possible.

▲ Richard Whittall takes a rest from drawing Elvis for the XTreme Racing data disk.

Silltunna Software

Siltunna Software haven't been around for very long. Six months to be precise, and they've produced a game already. Some have said it was hurried, but *XTreme Racing* is one of the most competitive multi-player games on the Amiga, a sort of first person perspective *Skidmarks* crossed with Acid's other top racing game, *Roadkill*. It's reviewe on page 42. As brand new, never heard of before developers we asked them about their future projects and the state of the market.

***"XTreme* was something I've wanted to do for a long time," says Alex Amsel, the programming half of the team. "The opportunity to actually realise the game**

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enough to justify further development. This comes down to three main reasons: machine specification, piracy and distribution.

Upgrades

We often come in for criticism in our letters pages for harping on endlessly about upgrading Amigas. This is fair comment. It costs money to buy accelerators, hard drives and CD-ROM drives and you have to remember that the Amiga was originally sold to us as a pretty much all encompassing machine.

Unlike PCs which have to have add-on graphics boards, sound boards and the like, the Amiga always came with good visuals and sound as standard. And the limitations of the trapdoor, the internal space of the wedge Amigas and the single PCMCIA slot have not altogether discouraged expansion (need is the mother of invention and there is, as you well know, a bewildering plethora of options for broadening your Amiga's horizons) but limited its scope somewhat.

Also, the price of the machine has been a stumbling block. At £200 a PC expansion is only a small fraction of the cost of a new machine and thus is seen as a comparatively small investment to improve a much bigger one. But £200 is over half the cost of a brand new Amiga, and if you've bought on a budget, then this sort of money seems ridiculous. The often ignored fact is that you can spend £1000 on buying and expanding an A1200 but you'll never get anywhere near that sort of money back if you have to sell it. No matter what's in it, it's still viewed as a cheap machine, unless you sell to a real enthusiast – and thankfully there are still some of them about.

But if you intend sticking with Amiga (which we heartily recommend) the only path is through upgrades. The PC market is software led. People have to upgrade just to run better software, but for most it's worth doing so. Technology stands still for no-one and although many see this cycle of development – powerful software needing ever more powerful computers – as some sort of conspiracy to make people part with cash, that's just life, marketing, the real world.

We all live, directly or indirectly by trade, by selling products. It's what makes the world go 'round. And we also always strive to do better. This is what software developers aim for.

Competition

There is a lot of competition in the software market, stand still and you'll fold. Moreover, new projects are exciting and all software developers love to see just how far they can take something. How close to the perfect game or application can one get?

This is why games like

▲ The wow-looking Slam-Tilt, 21st Century's bid to reclaim the Pinball high-ground from Effigy. Should be previewable next month, and we can't wait.

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came when I got in touch with Richard through your Art Gallery section, that's something you might like to brag about to your readers". We would never do something like that now, would we? "The blitter mode came about because we had to do the game for standard A1200s, and yes, the disk swopping routine is a drag, but it has to be that way. Ideally everybody would have hard drives and accelerators and that's what we wrote it for really, though it's still good on standard machines".

What about future development? "It all depends on how well *XTreme* sells. To be honest we're not expecting masses of sales, but if it justifies us staying at what we're doing then we've got other projects in the pipeline." Such as? "Well at the moment we're working on new tracks and a full track editor for owners of *XTreme*. It'll be available by March " ... "and it's going to feature trackside Elvises and perhaps even a full Elvis scenario" interjects Richard Whittall, the game's graphics man. Elvis? "Yes", continues Alex, "we want to inject a sense of humour into the new tracks to make them something worthwhile getting. We don't just want to do 'another 12 tracks', we want them to be special". "Would you like some coffee", interjects Richard. Yes please.

But more of the future! "Inevitably we're looking at a PC conversion of *XTreme* and possibly another PC only product, but as I said, if *XTreme* sells well we'll do another Amiga game. We'd also like to extend our help to other developers who want to get work published. We have close links with Mark Sibly [of Black magic] and are keen to encourage people in the same way he has encouraged us. Games like *Breed 3D, Gloom* and *XTreme* have shown that the Amiga is still good for games, and it's a great way for people to start out. Sure, there's not gigantic amounts of money involved in Amiga games any more, but if you do one or two good games on Amiga it sets you up to program on other platforms. If anyone does use us as publishers we intend to become involved in the planning and development of the game to help things along."

Kellion

Producers of *Leading Lap*, Kellion are currently in a bit of a state since, just before we interviewed them, they announced that the game might not be released. "Which is a pity", says Tony Dillon, "because it's a damn good game and we had other titles in the pipeline". "The current situation with Amiga Technologies doesn't help either, but I still think the outlook for Amiga software isn't as bad as it seems. The biggest problem is distribution, which is, I suppose, a product of poor sales in the past but there are a lot less games out there now and the user base is still big, so I'm surprised it doesn't sell fairly well still."

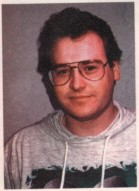
What are sales like on Amiga at the moment? "Well they used to sell 50,000 copies of some games, but a good game now sells under 10,000, some as little as 1000." What about *Worms* though, it's been a best seller? "Ah", says Patrick Kelly, co-producer and partner in Kellion, "that's being distributed by Ocean. If you've still got a major publisher like that, or indeed Warner, who are behind *Sensible Soccer* you've got the muscle to market the game heavily and sell truck loads." So money follows money, so to speak? "Yes, and we haven't got any at the moment, that's why we're so concerned about *Leading Lap* not being released".

What other projects have you got in the pipeline then? "Well, we're not at liberty to say what exactly but we're still using the Amiga big time as you can see, and it means a lot to me personally that we do games for it. At the moment we've several multimedia projects going, some of them on Amiga, so you'll have to wait and see what happens."

VIEWING : SILENT SHADOW

▲ This looks like Leading Lap. Still unreleased because of poor retail orders, despite good reviews in the press.

XTreme, *Breathless* and *The Killing Grounds* are so demanding. They all need a minimum of an 030 40MHz accelerator to run as the authors intended, because the authors are surrounded by Playstation, PC and Saturn and are trying to make the Amiga, a machine they love, compete with these formats. Make an Amiga game that's better than games on these formats. A year ago no-one said a *Doom* style game could be done on Amiga, now there have been several. Titles like *XTreme Racing* and Binary Asylum's *Zeewolf* are produced by Amiga only developers and are competitive, but only on fast Amigas.



▲ Martyn Brown: The Amiga is still capable of producing a great game ... AB3D II will show 'em.

The piracy problem

But maybe there just aren't enough fast Amigas out there because Amiga only developers like the above are not getting a fair return for their time and money. Alternatively piracy could be to blame. According to Team 17, *AB3D* was on the 'net before it was ever released in the shops. Now that is disgusting.

One developer described the sort of Catch 22 situation he felt caught in when releasing a high-spec game: "The problem is that some of the people who have gone to the trouble of upgrading their Amiga are hackers. They expand them because they are real computer freaks and want the power, but they also pirate the software written for expanded Amigas and distribute it via the 'net. We are very aware that there is likely to be three or four times as many copies of the game out there as we have sold because there have been a hell of a lot more RAM boards and accelerators sold. This is not so bad if you're selling 100, 000 units of a game. But if you're only selling a couple of thousand, which does not pay several people's wages once retailers' and publishers' cuts, advertising and packaging have all been deducted, there's just no way you can justify continuing to develop."

Basically, though it rarely gets the coverage it used to, piracy is still a big, big problem on the Amiga. Publishers and developers always said it would destroy the market but thankfully, so far, it hasn't been the reason for the decline. But take it from us, from now on if someone offers you a pirate copy of a recent game or technical package and you accept, you're putting one more nail in the Amiga's coffin.

▲ The piracy problem has not gone away: AB3D was allegedly on a bulletin board before it was released. This will destroy the market.

Distribution

Another major problem is distribution. How many of you have gone into your local software emporium and struggled to find the Amiga section, never mind the game you want?

Once again the Amiga is falling victim to its own good value. A brand new Amiga game averages between £25-£30, an application between £40-£100, which is great for us, the consumers. But wholesalers, shops and the salespeople who earn commission from wholesalers on the products they sell to shops are not so understanding. With PC games averaging £45-£50 per title and applications well over £100, profit margins at each point on the chain are higher. That's not to mention the sort of

New Publishers ...

No software would ever get to the shops without a distributor of some sort. And with the larger companies no longer interested in dealing with Amiga products, room has opened up for a new generation of publishers and distributors to step in.

Guildhall Leisure

Guildhall Leisure has been around in some form or other for 13 years now. Originally known as CDS (whom some of you may be familiar with) it changed its name to Guildhall two years ago and has now got some pretty top titles under its belt. Giles Hunter, its founder, has three things which drive him on and keep him supporting the Amiga: A) Making money, B) The enjoyment of finding new talent, C) Making the products of this talent successful.

They've been involved with Amiga since it was first launched and intend to keep going for as long as is viably possible. We asked PR Manager Maureen Fraser what has been their most successful title: "*Super Skidmarks* ... this was launched in December 1993 on behalf of an unknown company. It's only claim to fame then was a title which turned out to be a best selling programming language: *Blitz Basic*. It was *Skidmarks* that launched Acid Software but also gave Guildhall Leisure the reputation for handling quality products and, more importantly, achieving success with them."

How do you source product? "Because of the success we have had with *Super Skidmarks, Gloom, Graham Gooch Cricket, Colossus Chess X* and *XTreme Racing* and because we've worked hard to build what we believe is a good reputation, we are currently finding that product is being offered to us rather than having to source it." So what makes a product successful then, and how do you go about telling people who send you real dogs that you're not interested? "Primarily, a good product makes good distribution. We are very careful about telling people that they have sent us a 'real dog' because, as we have seen so many times in the past, blockbusters have come from unknown and obscure people. We are selective, but don't want to be ignorant and we certainly aren't clever. Unfortunately, to achieve any level of widespread distribution with an Amiga product, we have to be confident it will achieve 85% plus in all magazine ratings."

How do you handle distribution? "We have two people liaising with as many UK and European distributors and retailers as they can, Hugo Hunter and his sales assistant. At last count we supplied into 15 countries including Australia, America, Germany and Poland." And what goodies do you have for us in 1996?

▲ Top: programmed in Blitz Basic, Acid software's Skidmarks launched their programming language onto the international games scene. Both have bee success stories for Guildhall. Above: Fears.

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Thus developers like Kellion with finished games like *Leading Lap* (see previous page) cannot get it distributed. Sure, someone will take it on, as Black Legend did, but even they could not get enough advance orders for the game to justify Kellion going ahead with the expense of actually producing the packaging, manuals etc and duplicating the game.

Increased demand

But things are looking better. During Christmas 1995 shops simply didn't stock enough Amiga products, they were so busy packing their shelves with other kit. But there is still big demand for Amiga products, as demonstrated by very good sales for Sensi World, Worms and Alien Breed 3D and now that the new year has dawned and the frenzy of the Playstation launch has become a distant memory, it's business as usual. The shops are accepting more Amiga product again, especially the big HMV and Virgin chains so make sure you buy some, or it could all go pear shaped again! ■

New software releases ...

On the technical side of things, there is plenty of top software lined up for 1996, all competitive with the best on offer from rival machines. GP Soft are continuing to improve *Directory Opus*, with *DOpus 5.x* due for release in April. According to Greg Perry: "This is not just any ordinary upgrade, this is a major upgrade. We're incorporating many of the things people said they would have liked to see in *Opus 5*. It's not a new version, but there will be a lot of change for the good."

According to Giles Harwood of SoftWood Products: "We are as committed as ever to producing new software for the Amiga. As usual we'll be working on newer versions of our applications and will have announcements during the year of new features we'll be adding". The first of these will be *Final Writer 5* – the next instalment of the *Wordworth* versus *Final Writer* battle. "As far as the future of the Amiga goes, we would welcome some clearer news from AT about what their specific plans are for the platform" added Giles.

▲ Giles Harwood of SoftWood: working on new versions of all their applications.

With a new version of *Imagine* reviewed this issue and *LightWave 4* looming on the horizon, along with more product updates from Digita, who have also signed a deal with Cloanto to distribute some of their products there is plenty of high grade software on the way.

On the games front new titles are still on the way from 21st Century (another Pinball game – *Slamtilt*), and south coast stalwarts Vulcan Software are planning four releases right up until the summer. Although Team 17 are again saying that *Alien Breed 3D II: The Killing Grounds* is their last game, development director Martin Brown hasn't ruled out another release. "It takes a special game to really sell well these days and if another *Worms* rolls in we won't hesitate to launch it. *The Killing Grounds* is something I really wanted to do, to show that despite all that's said about the Amiga it's still capable of producing a great game. I want this to push the Amiga as far as it can go." Keep an eye on Mat's games news: there are plenty of software surprises around the corner.

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Above: Fears.

For Amiga there are approximately six new releases planned but as we are in the process of finalising contracts, titles and timetables you will just have to wait!"

OTM

We asked the publishers of *IntOS, BTCC* and *Virtual Karting* just what 'OTM' stood for but both Martin and Steven declined to let us into the secret. "Figure it out for yourself", they said. They've had a good run selling the above products, thanks to good publicity and a strong sponsorship deal, but we haven't been that impressed with their games so far. "That's just your opinion, other magazines have given us good marks, but I'm sure you'll like our next couple of titles".

▲ OTM: positive about the short term future with games like Watchtower and Atrophy, but worried about what lies around the the corner if Amiga Technologies don't sell more Amigas.

OTM's distribution schedule includes *Watchtower* (previewed on page 38) and *Atrophe*, a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up in the classic mold. Although the lines between publishing and distributing seem to blur with both OTM and Guildhall (both can handle most of the functions of both publisher and distributor, from packaging and manuals through to duplication and distribution) it's because, according to Martin Lown, this sort of flexible approach is necessary in the market today. "We like to develop products further after we first get them, bring them to a stage where we're sure we can sell them into distribution. Thus we offer a complete back-up and marketing system. Although we do sell through a large distributor, we also get on the phone ourselves and provide a back-up service, making sure that shops do take our products."

And what about the state of the Amiga market at the moment. "I know things look bad", says Martin, "but the important thing is that people can still make money with us, even from a relatively low overall sale." And where does OTM source it's product? "*Virtual Karting* is from Italy, and Fabio is working on another exciting product for us at the moment, *Watchtower* is from a Finnish team called CyberArts and we have other European developers lined up".

What about later on this year? "We have more products llined up for later on in the year, but we really have to wait and see what happens with the Amiga. We are open to anyone sending us product for evaluation with a view to publishing and distribution. There is still money to be made and there are plenty of creative people and good games out there too."

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ScreenScene

This month's batch of games releases sees some old favourites with the words deluxe, extra or turbo tacked onto them. Does this trend in the software industry of releasing sequels to successful games mean that we are getting a completely new game in the same genre as the successful original? Or do we end up with something which is essentially the same game but with a few added extras. I think it depends on the results.

In the case of SSFII Turbo the updated version of this beat 'em up classic is very welcome indeed. Gametek's version of the Turbo edition is a much better conversion than US Gold's of the super edition.

Super Skidmarks Extra is basically 12 new tracks for the original superb game. Gloom Deluxe, however, although improved graphics wise remains largely the same. If you've already got a copy of Gloom then I wouldn't advise you to splash out on this. However, if you've yet to get yourself a copy of this excellent Doom clone then make sure you get the Deluxe version because it's the best version of Gloom yet.

Perhaps, software companies could take a leaf out of Team 17's book when it comes to releasing games built on earlier successes. Team 17's smash Alien Breed is to be soon followed by a sequel - Alien Breed 3D II (The Killing Fields). From the early version we've seen it looks like it's going to be a totally new game but still retaining all the things that made us love the original Breed. Great stuff.

Finally, one our most popular cover disks ever, XTreme Racing, is finally finished. You'll be glad to know that it was worth the wait.

Lisa Collins
Deputy Editor

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BLACK MAGIC

Alien Breed 3DII

The Killing Grounds

■ Due: April ■ Publisher: Team 17 © 01924 267776

It's back and it means business. Alien Breed 3D was a top rated game but Team 17 thought they could do better. And no-one believed them.

If you look at the back page of the manual for *Alien Breed 3D*, Andy Clitheroe is credited with a lot of things: programming, game code, graphics, game design and manual writing. What they haven't credited him with is being a big soppy show off. It all started over a year ago when a mate of his girlfriend, Jackie, got *Doom* on the PC. She said it was brilliant so, just to impress her, big Andy said something like: "I could do a game like that for you darling, no problem!" So he furiously set out to prove his manhood and created a 3D maze engine and editor, some scary aliens and, after buying Martyn Brown a couple of Caffreys ales (vouchers for Caffreys included with game demos reputedly elicit a much more positive response from Mr. Brown), had it released as *Alien Breed 3D*. Jackie was impressed. Allegedly.

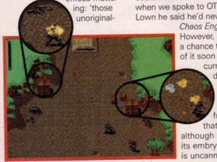
And so were thousands of people who bought the game. Something still worried Martyn Brown though: cheeky usurpers were launching products with much better resolution ("but not playability" according to him) than his cherished *Breed* and he just wasn't going to lie down on the pub floor and take it. This is where it gets weird, but stay with me.

Andy Clitheroe, ensconced in a Rocky mountain love nest with his mind on other things, was unwilling to come out of retirement just to satisfy Brown's jealous megalomania though, and it seemed as if all we would get was a *Breed 3D Special Edition*, with extra levels and the editor. Then a mercenary game producer called Phil kidnapped Jackie, and the only way to get her back was for Andy to start work on a new *Breed 3D*. The stage was set for a dramatic comeback.

Watchtower

■ Due: February ■ Publisher: OTM © 01827 312 302

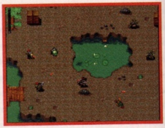
As the old proverb goes "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery". Maybe Warner might take this stance when they see *Watchtower* OTM's latest release. Or perhaps the boys and girls at Warner might spend weeks stomping around their offices muttering: 'those unoriginal-thinking swines at OTM have ripped off our top selling game *Chaos Engine* and what are we gonna do about it!" But then OTM could retort with other trusted proverbs such as "if it ain't broke don't fix it" (not a proverb I know) or "only the best get better". Or the similarity at this early stage could be coincidental because when we spoke to OTM's Martin Lown he said he'd never even seen *Chaos Engine* before. However, he might get a chance to something of it soon as *Chaos 2* is currently in development.



▲ Top left: blow this crate away and you've got yourself a heavy duty rifle. Right: these crates reveal some bonus pick ups.

Either way, there's no getting away from the fact that *Watchtower*, although presently in its embryonic stages, is uncannily like the excellent shoot 'em up *Chaos Engine*. In *Watchtower* you are a commando with a set of military style missions that must completed. Although these missions take place over differing terrain – jungle, desert, city – the basic premise is the same: shoot all armed soldiers before they get you, blow away anything such as heavy wooden crates that get in your way to get more rifles, grenades, and other bonus pick ups. Sounds familiar.

So far *Watchtower* looks and feels very similar to *Chaos Engine*. To their credit, the Finnish based Development team, CyberArts have done a great job with the graphics. The demo version we received looked superb and it was also very easy to play. The graphics are in another league compared to OTM's other forays into the gaming world: *Virtual Karting* and the infamous *British Touring Car Challenge*.



▲ Soldiers to the left, grenades to the right. Our man's stuck in the middle with you.

We've only seen the first level of *Watchtower* and it looks good so far. The finished version will determine how far it matches up to the high standard of *Chaos Engine* and if it does, great. *Watchtower* should be released next month. It will be two-player, hard disk installable and will run on the A1200/A4000 and CD32. ■

Lisa Collins

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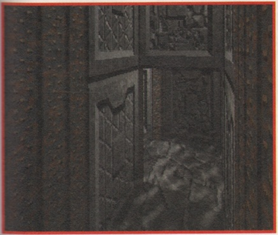
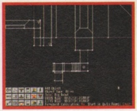


▲ **See the ripples on the floor? That's water. You can walk through it standing up or completely submerged. Some weapons will not work under water though. Top right: The level editor.**

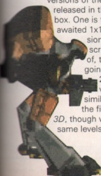


Which is, as you may have realised, a load of rubbish. But it's much more exciting than what really happened, believe me.

For all Amigas!

We published screenshots of the new game a couple of months ago and they have also been available on Team 17's Web site. These have caused some controversy because of their quality: people have written to and Emailed Team 17 stating their disbelief that they're actually from the game. And to be quite honest we had our own doubts. So I hopped into my car and spent four hours on the M1 crawling to Ossett, *Breed* Global HQ, to find out.

Three seconds after loading a level of the game I became a believer. What is now known as *The Killing Grounds* is so much different from the first one, it seems almost a complete re-write. But, according to Andy, most of the groundwork was already done in the first one and the editor remains essentially the same.



There will actually be two versions of the game released in the same box. One is the long awaited 1x1 pixel version we've got screenshots of, the other is going to be a 2x2 pixel version, similar in look to the first *Breed 3D*, though with the same levels as the higher spec version. The big news is that the latter is designed to work not just on basic A1200s (the 1x1 pixel mode is too slow without an accelerator) it also will work on any 2Mb Amiga with an 020 or better processor. ECS Amiga owners previously denied the joys of *Breed 3D* have a lot to look forward too if this version works as planned.

Lights 'n' glare

But what I really went to see was the 1x1 pixel game and although it's not going to be finished for another two months (a March/April release is on the cards) it's coming along nicely. I was shown it running on an 030 50MHz upgraded Amiga 1200 and with a two thirds screen size it was faster than either of its main competitors, *Gloom* and *Breathless*, though creatures still have to be added. Only one of the old aliens is being retained: the red demon dog, and at least eight new ones are being rendered in *Imagine*.

Apart from all the visual advantages inherent in the gorgeous screen mode, other new features include a look up/down option a la *Breathless* as well as the 'ducking' and running options of the original. Weapon shots now have real time lighting, illuminating the dark corridors they are fired down and the various lamps and torches littered throughout each maze have shimmering glare and smoke effects, adding realism.

Intelligence

More frantic news is that the game is no longer just a matter of killing aliens, getting keys and leaving the level; *The Killing Grounds* will feature a defined mission for each level. According to producer Phil Quirke-Webster "the style of gameplay is much more like *Heretic* than *Doom*. We wanted to make it more mission based than just strictly shoot 'em up". Towards this end the aliens now have a much improved artificial intelligence. "In truth they had no AI at all in *Breed 3D*", according to Andy Clitheroe, "it just seemed as though they had. This time they can communicate with each other and operate in teams. If you make noise in one part of a level, or you shoot an alien, you can be sure his team will be after you fast".

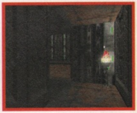
And because of a bigger emphasis on platforms and multi-layered levels, with the up-down firing option, the player will also be able to pick up a jet pack and fuel icons. "This adds a new dimension to the game", claims Andy, "there are floating aliens, but now you have more mobility too. You'll also be able to pick up combination back-packs which contain some ammo, some health and some fuel, rather than just picking up one at a time". One of the most atmospheric aspects of the original was the water levels, allowing you to duck under. They are retained in *The Killing Grounds* but look even better.

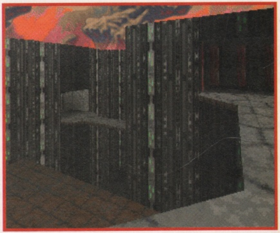
This version will also be supplied with the full map editor allowing you to create completely new mazes and drop in aliens with relative ease. According to Phil: "in the manual we'll use the existing levels as a sort of tutorial for people to mess about with, then they can create their own ones".

I can conform that *Alien Breed 3D II: The Killing Grounds* is stunning in motion, not just in screenshots. If Andy manages to get all of the features he's promised into the final game, with anywhere near the speed I saw it running at, they're onto a winner. We should have a review in the next two months. ■

Alan Dykes

▲ **Phil Quirke-Webster (left), Andy Clitheroe in Team 17's development dungeon.**





▲ **The mazes are now even more complicated and multi-layered. The Addition of a jet pack should make them more navigable though.**

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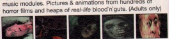

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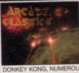

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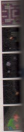

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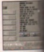

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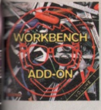

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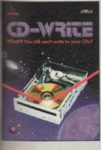

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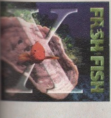

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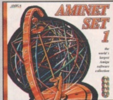

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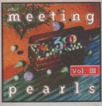

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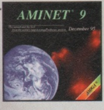

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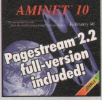

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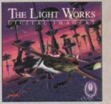

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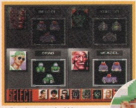
XTreme Racing

■ **Price: £29.99** ■ **Publisher: Black Magic/Silltunna** ✆ **01302 890 000**

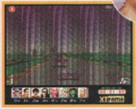
AMIGA SUPERSTAR

Billed as one of the best racing games in a long time last month's cover disk gave you a taste of what to expect. And by golly it's good.

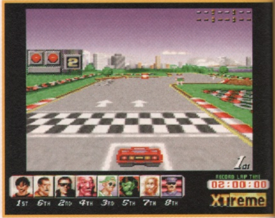
As the old saying goes: 'If the mountain won't come to Mohammed, he'll render a new one in *Vista Pro*'. If you're in the heart of rural England gagging for decent games and no-one is producing them, you've got to do it yourself. And so a young lad with big, steel toecapped boots and an internet account set himself the task of not quite recreating *Mario Kart* on Amiga. Alex Amsel, Wolves supporter, programmer and game designer, claims: "It's actually not at all like *Mario Kart*, any resemblances are only superficial". And he's right you know, there's not a Mario or Yoshi in sight.



▲ Four players at a time! It's very cramped and a tad slow. But it's good.



▲ It honestly looks better than this in A1200 blitter mode and it is playable. But with an accelerator ...



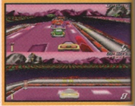
▲ This is where you want to start each time. It's not so easy though, you (well, I) usually begin at the back.

Despite very little advance publicity Silltunna's little gem has raised a lot of interest and we were eager for the full title to arrive in: especially after last month's cover demo. This was one of the most popular disks ever, if the amount of phone calls and letters we've received about it is anything to go by. The boxed game finally arrived the day before our Christmas hols and we had it up and running, serial linked between two Amigas in a flash. Luckily, after Christmas, Lisa was on extended holidays and the cattle prod she normally uses to extract reviews from us was hung up on the wall, well out of harm's way. So we spent ages playing it, examining every nook and cranny of every track with every car: purely for research purposes of course.

A barrel of fish

But there were a couple of things that really puzzled us about *XTreme Racing* before it ever turned up. Who were Silltunna? Where did they get the weird name? Why had we never heard of it before?

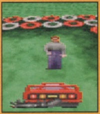
First things first, Silltunna consists of two chaps from Staffordshire, Alex Amsel and Richard Whittall, helped by dozens of wonderful graphics and sound wizards, idea people and the general sort of top class lads and lasses that hang around programmers' bedrooms. They also solicited much help and



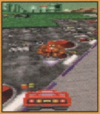
▲ Two player mode. Get another Amiga and a serial cable though and you can have up to eight players!

Suicidal bystanders

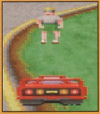
Racing around *XTreme*'s tracks, one can't fail to notice the poor fools standing vulnerably on corners or wandering over and back on the track. If you hit one it's pretty messy but we all have to put up with these sort of trials and tribulations.



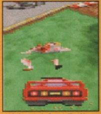
▲ Hello man. Mind if I bump into you for the camera?



▲ This is some sort of weird floating Chicken. Soon it'll be dinner.



▲ A rather large short trousers wearing idiot stands on a corner ...



▲ And regrets it. Scenes like this are accompanied by a squelch.

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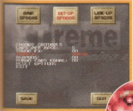
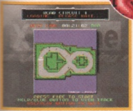


CHANGE CONTROLS
CARS PER RACE: 5
SOUND FX: ON
WEAPONS: ON
HUMAN CARS EQUAL: NO
RESET OPTIONS
EXIT

▲ A boring options menu. But look, you have a choice of five types of music.



▲ The overhead viewer allows you to see the lie of the land before starting the race.

encouragement from Mark Sibly in New Zealand who has lent the Black Magic name to the project in a publishing capacity, as well as advising on certain aspects of the gameplay and design: such is his faith in it.

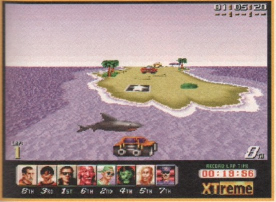
The name Silltunna is Swedish in origin and means 'barrel of fish', which the lads think is a right laugh. They claim it doesn't really signify anything, it just sounds cool. Development only started in August 1995 after Alex had contacted Richard when some artwork by him was published in CU Amiga Mag's Art Gallery. I'd say that's some achievement: 0-100% finished in under six months!

Weapons

XTreme Racing is fairly conventional in terms of setup, after all it's a racing game. There are 12 tracks, eight cars, a single race mode, a season mode, a championship mode and a death match. Hold on. Death match? The latter is available in two or more player mode and involves competitors driving a car around a choice of maze-like circuits trying to bump each other off, and it's top fun. The reason this mode has been included is that weapons are available in *XTreme Racing*, though you can disable this in the options menu if you like.

Certain points on each track are littered with question marks. When you run over a question mark it will yield a random icon of some sort. These include jumps and turbos and, more importantly, weapons. These are divided up into roughly three categories: passive, active, and booby traps. Passive weapons include forward and backward firing bombs, quad directional rockets and simple line of sight rockets. Active weapons include homing missiles, sheep (a woolly missile), delayed action mines and direction changers (which effect the steering of opponents). Booby traps include mines and laughing bananas which are designed to be dropped on the driving line so that other cars will run over them. It's no fun if you hit these yourself.

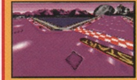
The object of all these bombtastic shenanigans is to enable you (or a computer/human opponent) to gain the advantage in a race. If there's one thing more satisfying than passing another car through sheer driving skill, it's blowing them up first and then passing them. This can also happen to you though, and if you set the race on one of the higher of three difficulty levels it happens with alarming frequency.



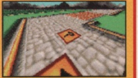
▲ The wacky beach level features shark patrols which send the car spinning like a top should you run into them. Unfortunately, avoiding a shark often lands your car in deep water, where it will sink from sight.

Sand and snot

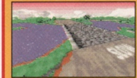
There are twelve tracks divided up into six zones in *XTreme Racing*. The idea remains the same for all, but the difficulty levels and sort of obstacles encountered keep the game interesting.



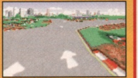
▲ The Floating City levels are fraught with high flying hi-jinks and over-the-edge into the chasm of no return danger. We approve.



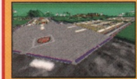
▲ The Castle levels feature no castles but lots of juvenile nose mucus (the green areas). Drive over the question marks and pick up weapons.



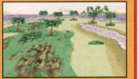
▲ The grasslands are indeed surrounded by lush green grass and also contain dangerous 'got that sinking feeling' lakes of doom.



▲ The relatively straightforward road circuits are ideal for practicing those driving lines and brakework artistry we all fancy ourselves at.



▲ The Toxic Refinery levels are among the most dangerous in the game. Sharp bends and awkward jumps are the order of the day.

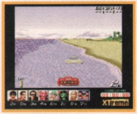


▲ And so to the beach for some relaxation. In season mode this is dreadfully slow 'till you upgrade your car, but it's good fun when fast.

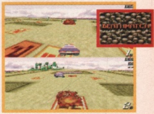
Wacky tracks

The twelve tracks are divided up into six different zones. The most conventional of these are the Road Circuits and the Grasslands tracks. The least conventional are the Floating City and Toxic Refinery ones which are all futuristic and moody. All feature jumps and obstacles, some of which are dangerous, some of which will merely slow you down. In the Castle tracks there are big gaps in the circuit which have to be jumped. To do so you need to hit the ramps placed in front of them at considerable speed and at the right angle. If you miss the ramp or hit it too slowly you'll end up sinking in a green sea, known childishly by Silltunna as "The Sea Of Snot". Similar scenarios exist on other levels. When you sink into water or snot, or fall over the edge of a road in the Floating City level, you don't lose a life – the computer will place your car past the obstacle you missed but you do lose time and probably several positions on the track.

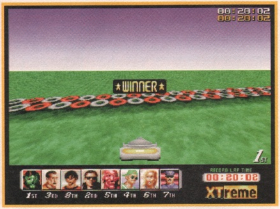
Other obstacles designed to slow you down include trackside



▲ Driving through the water slows everyone down, but avoid the deep blue: the car will sink.



▲ In two-player death match mode you and a friend get to shoot at each other for fun and first place.



▲ My little prize for winning the race. More importantly, in season mode, you get £2000 for coming first, which will enable you to upgrade your car even more (see below).

spectators whom you can run over, exploding oil barrels and most bizarrely, in the seaside levels, sharks which make your car spin like a top if you hit them.

Speed!

Just how good *XTreme Racing* is depends on how fast your Amiga is. Anyone who's seen the demo from last month's magazine will know what I mean. *XTreme* has more menu options than a Chinese takeaway. These include routines for just about every possible upgrade of an AGA machine available.

You can, believe it or not, play *XTreme* on a standard A1200, with 2Mb RAM and no hard drive, but it's a bit like going into a Chinese takeaway and asking for plain boiled rice. The game will automatically opt for blittered screen routines and you'll see something not dissimilar to *Virtual Karting*, though ten times better in the playability stakes. You can then size the playing screen up or down to suit your speed tastes.

If you have a 1220 or 1230 accelerator and extra RAM you're into spring roll, sweet and sour pork, fried rice and banana fritter territory. It suddenly becomes a tasty and good looking game, with plenty of speed and the option of a slowish, but beautiful 1x1 pixel screenmode. However, if you're really speed hungry, elitist 040 and 060 owners have the equivalent of Mr. Wong's £40 Emperor's Dinner menu with all the trimmings. Full speed 1x1 pixel heaven we reckon.

Had I not played the hi-res versions I would have been able to put up with the blittered routines. Unlike *VK*, they did not make me sick. However, if you do not have a hard drive or at least a spare external disk drive don't even contemplate investing in *XTreme Racing*. I don't think I've ever sat doing as many disk swops as I did while testing it on an Amiga with none of the above. It goes beyond frustrating, believe me.

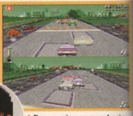
And so ...

I've given *XTreme* two score boxes because it's really almost two different games. As an accelerated game playing off hard drive it's wonderful; best fun we've had in ages. As a standard A1200 game (A4000 owners need not worry, it is fully compatible and great) you will need a minimum of one, preferably two external drives and it can be a bit tedious.

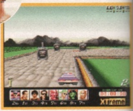
Yes there are other faults, the biggest of which is dodgy collision detection in too many places, making it difficult to accurately judge sharp corners, dodge gunk and pick up question marks, but I'm more than willing to forgive this because it's so much fun you can't bear any grudges.

The final test of any game is how long it delays real work in the office and *XTreme Racing* almost got us all fired. It's true to say that this job could be construed as being a bit cushy; I mean, playing games is all part of a day's work. But there comes a time when joysticks must be downed and keyboards put back on desks so that we can do what we're really paid for: writing. That time came and went in a flurry of red, blue and yellow cars and as deadlines drew close the threats got louder and playing the game for a bit more 'research' became unjustifiable. Finally the fateful "Forbidden Castle Level 2 that broke the camels back" came along and I had to write or die. Oh well, all good things must come to an end: and there's always next month! ■

Alan Dykes



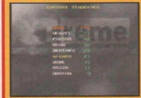
▲ The camera views are comprehensive. You can monitor other cars in this mode.



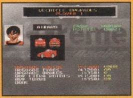
▲ These awkward smiling rocks jump up and down and can crush you or block your path.

A spot of season racing against the pros

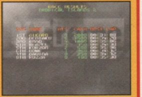
In season mode you start off with a much slower car than normal. You can still have a multi-player game but you cannot select the tracks, this is automatic. Each track is now littered with gold and silver coins too and while trying to win, or get a decent position, you've got to collect as many of these as possible. In fact if you're losing badly it's best to give up the ghost and just collect coins. A combination of coins and prize money allows you to upgrade your car in the all important areas of Engine, Brakes, Tire grip etc and also allows you to buy turbos and extra points (enabling you to sneakily climb the ranks by the back door, so to speak). This mode is seriously competitive, though the automatically selected tracks are not always the best.



▲ That's me, Aikaro. A bad start has left me languishing in fifth place overall.



▲ The stars beside the prices indicate how much you've upgraded your car. Five stars is the maximum.



▲ On top of winning £2000 cash for coming first you can collect over £1000 in coins on the track.

XTREME RACING A1200

system requirements
A1200 2Mb RAM. Supplied on three disks. Hard disk recommended or external floppy essential to retain sanity.

graphics	78%
sound	84%
lastability	80%
playability	91%

OVERALL
Held back by graphics mode and disk loading. **80%**

XTREME ACCELERATED

system requirements
A1200 with 020, 030, 040, 060 accelerator, extra RAM and a hard drive. A CD32 joypad would be nice.

graphics	91%
sound	84%
lastability	93%
playability	91%

OVERALL
The best fun we've had in ages. **91%**

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cars and as
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jump up and down
path.

A1200

plied on three
mended or exter-
retain sanity.

78%
84%
80%
91%

80%

RATED

040, 060
M and a hard
would be nice.

91%
84%
93%
91%

91%

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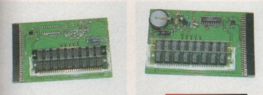

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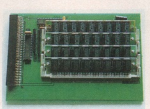

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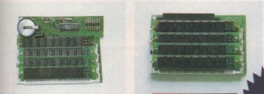

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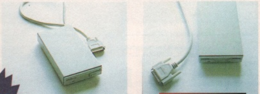

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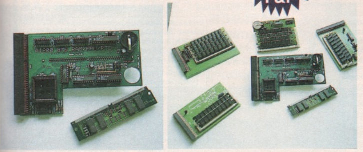

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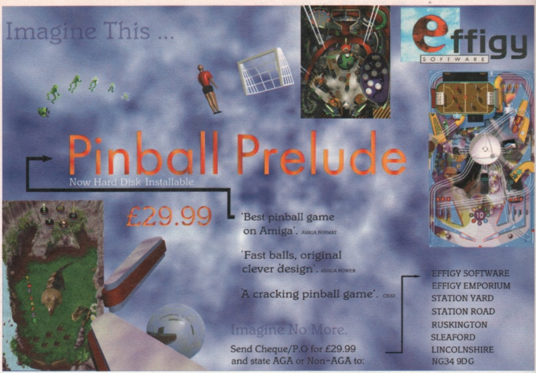

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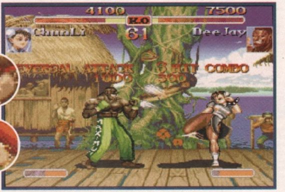
Super Street Fighter II
TURBO

■ Price: £29.99 ■ Publisher: Gametek ✆ 01753 445

Capcom's original Street Fighter is arguably the grandfather of all fighting games. We look at the latest addition to the ranks of fighting games on the Amiga.



▲ Combination and reversal attacks help to clock up more points for the high score table.

Fighting games are here to stay. Even right-on parents who force feed their kids a diet of muesli and liberalism have a vested interest in them. Let me explain ...

No matter how 'nice' darling Tarquin seems to Mummy and Daddy, he is, like all children, no more pacifist than Saddam Hussein. All their efforts to remove the aggressive element from their offspring will come to nought as soon as the little horror starts playing with Johnny Tomkins from the bottom of the road. It'll take just ten minutes before a small dispute about who's turn it is to annoy the cat next door develops into World War 3.

Let them take their aggression out on a game is what I say, and, like it or not, that's what many kids do.

Whilst there may be several well-intentioned psychological reasons for playing fighting games (not least of all helping to keep the monsters from physical injury), the main reason for pulling on your gloves should be because, whatever you say about the morality, there's usually a marvellously competitive game to play. This, it may be argued, is what put the fighting genre into the forefront of one-on-one competitive games and with last year's release of the movies Street Fighter and Mortal Kombat, it's not difficult to see that their popularity remains strong.

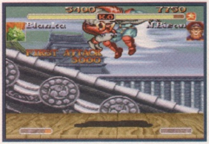
The original *Street Fighter* and *Street Fighter 2* began an incredible pedigree which unfortunately has fared badly on the Amiga, most recently at the hands of US Gold with *Super Street Fighter II*. But Gametek have now put in a bid to change this reputation and *Super Street Fighter II Turbo* appears, at first glance, to have all the right ingredients.

New faces

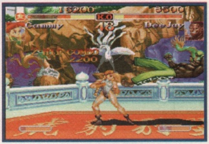
SSFII Turbo, (the names are certainly getting longer!) has all of the familiar characters and more. There are 16 in total, each encompassing their own very unique style of fighting.

Players will soon recognise their favourite character and stick with them through thick and thin as they identify their opponents weaknesses and go in brutally for the kill.

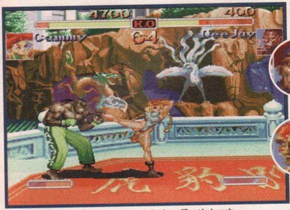
Balance is everything in fighting games and *SSFII* Turbo richly deserves the Tai Chi black belt for keeping a perfect equilibrium between such diverse characters. For example, Chun



▲ Bonus points are awarded to the player making the first connection.



▲ Cammy and Dee Jay are recent additions to the Street Fighting line-up.



▲ Superb background detail runs throughout the game in the sixteen different backgrounds.

Li's athleticism, speed and kicks are well effective, but her punches are as useful as an ashtray on a motorbike, while Balrog has a top notch range of punches but cannot kick at all!

When fighting, each of the characters have the standard arcade machine's soft, medium and hard hits available, along with several special moves including throws, dances, fireballs and spectacular feats of bodily manipulation. The special moves always seem impossible to begin with but as you get used to a particular character, you'll find that the combinations of buttons and directions needed to execute their moves becomes old hat. But beware – part of the game's balance dictates that if you get hit when making an attack, the damage inflicted to you is commensurate with the force of your abortive attack.

We certainly found that the best way to control the characters was using CD32 joy pads. In fact, if you actually try the other way, using the optional joystick/keyboard control, you're bound to break your fingers/keyboard/pain threshold for your trouble.

Hard drive only

Supplied on 11 disks (that's just 14 short of the number in the human spine), the game can only be played from hard drive which involves a fair bit of back-breaking disk swopping before it finally settles into an 11Mb slot on your machine.

Why so huge? Well, this version boasts excellent graphics with big, colourful sprites and excellent backgrounds that, for the first time really show the game's full arcade pedigree. As any aspiring beauty will tell you, what you get out in looks is only a reflection of what you've put in beforehand, and without any doubt, the graphics in this game are in the supermodel league.

Jerky boys!

It's a pity that with this level of detail the game is jerky during combat, even on the highest of the three speeds available and at the lowest of the two user definable resolutions – even though the difference between each of these options seemed minimal on our standard A1200 setup.

So we decided to try to give the game a bit more zip by plugging in a Blizzard 1230 IV accelerator. It did make the whole game much smoother, almost console standard, but only up to the point where the graphics hung irrecoverably. This incompatibility with our accelerator is bound to have Blizzard owners everywhere throwing up their hands, slightly jerkily, in horror.

However, owners of other makes of board may find it worthwhile contacting the publishers to see if their accelerator will work, as the speed is almost perfect once you've given it some help.

Where's the in-fight music?

In play there are two options – tournament mode where a single player must knuckle their way through the all of the other opponents, and the two player game, which is really what any version of *Street Fighter* is all about. Here, however, the game fails to offer the player the handicapping options present in the CD32 version. Why this should be the case is not entirely clear but it does mean that a seasoned player will always be able to beat any casual player that happens by.

With no chance for me to iron out the jerky animation coupled with the lack of music during fights and the periodically poor collision detection, what we are left with is a fighting game with excellent graphics that fails to give the fluidity of feel present in *Mortal Kombat 3* and *Shadow Fighters*. In this light it may be less than perfect but for fans of the original coin-op it still represents as accurate a conversion of the arcade game as we are ever likely to get on Amiga.

With acceleration and two CD32 joypads it's a fine game indeed, but remember, you also need a hard drive. And I'm afraid that this combination (which is necessary, believe me) will limit sales of the game.■

Garth Sumpter

Fighting Machines

Anyone who hasn't heard of the *Street Fighter* phenomenon couldn't have been listening very well over the last few years. Capcom's *Street Fighter* saga gave SEGA Enterprises some of the biggest selling arcade machines of all time. In the golden years of late 1987 the first *Street Fighter* machine was delivered into the high street in Britain. However the first version didn't really set the arcades ablaze. It came complete with punching pads and received a lukewarm reception. Six months later, after revising the code, removing the punch pads and adding joysticks and buttons the *Street Fighter II* game that we all know today was born. And along with it came the birth of the first world-wide recognised console fighting game. It was obvious that the arcade game would have to be ported to computers but the technology took a while to decant onto SEGA's Megadrive. Once released in 1991 though, it certainly took the world of console games by storm.

▲ Fighting twin Dhalsims is especially difficult when they elect to wear matching clothes.

▲ Vega is deadly with his long, razor-sharp claws but Fei Long is not without his own special moves including throws.

▲ Blanka's electric attack certainly looks spectacular but lacks atmosphere without a shocking sound effect.

SSFII TURBO

- workbench version.........3.0+
- number of disks 11
- RAM.............................2Mb+
- hard drive definitely required

A1200

graphics	93%
sound	69%
lastability	88%
playability	82%

OVERALL

An honest attempt that nearly succeeds. **83%**

ıg game with
that fails to
feel present in
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it still repre-
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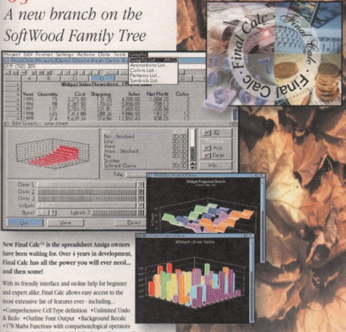

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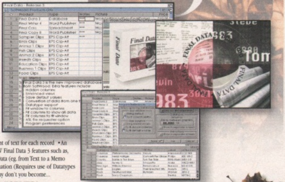

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Gloom Deluxe

Price: £29.99 ■ Publisher: Black Magic ✆ 01302 890 000

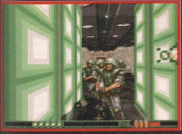
AMIGA SUPERSTAR

Gloom is still a rockin' game, but to make the homicidal punters even happier Mark Sibly has gone and updated the graphics.

I've always been wary of things that say 'deluxe' or 'lux' or any other form of word denoting luxury as a marketing term. When I was a lad, washing with Lux soap meant going to school smelling like a girl. I used to spend all my pocket money buying spring onion crisps just to try and smell normal (for a kid anyway) and this has scarred me for life. And what about cars? L is supposed to stand for luxury and what a piece of old junk you get when you buy an Escort L. Although the letter L is intended to convey a positive impression, on cars it invariably denotes 'bottom of the range, cheap ... most likely to rust', while DL or Deluxe means you get a crappy radio and side stripes thrown in for an extra £500.

Side stripes

So I wasn't that impressed with the name *Gloom Deluxe* and I was right: it's just *Gloom* with side stripes. These side stripes are pretty impressive mind you, they allow anyone with an 020 processor or better and 2Mb of RAM to run the game. Which means if you have an ECS machine with an accelerator you're in business. That said, it worked perfectly well on our office A3000 but refused to load on our upgraded A600 (using the Apollo 620 board with 4Mb RAM). Further support is provided for those with graphics boards in big box Amigas. You can open it up in a resizable window on your Workbench and have no end of multi-tasking fun and games. The graphics modes run in 4x4, 2x2 or 1x1 pixel modes or various combinations like 2x1 etc and this allows you to tailor the game's speed to your machine. If you have an AGA Amiga you will only buy this version of *Gloom* for its 1x1 pixel resolution and to entertain any idea of running it in this mode you'll need an accelerator. Smooth isn't the word if you've got heaps of RAM and a 33MHz 030 or better, though to get fast and playable full screen action in 1x1 pixel mode you'll need a 50MHz 030 or 040. 2x2 was the standard for the original version and the game is more than reasonable in this, so if you've got a fast ECS machine this is the mode to go for. 4x4 pixel mode must have been included by Sibly as some sort of joke. Pixels the size of lollipops are hardly conducive to playing an all singing and dancing action game.

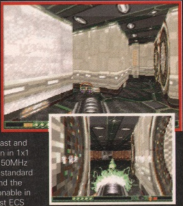


▲ I see green is in this year for high-res, argumentative marines.

Any changes?

But, er, that's it from a practical point of view. Gameplay seems more involving but, more importantly, the game map itself doesn't appear to have changed at all. It's still one of the fastest and most competitive shoot 'em ups on Amiga but I would seriously baulk at recommending that anyone upgrade to this version.

If you are a new purchaser, interested in buying *Gloom* for the first time then get *Gloom Deluxe* as opposed to *Gloom*: if you have the machine spec to run it, the 1x1 pixel mode makes it well worth while. But even if you've got a screaming fast AGA Amiga and you've already completed or nearly completed *Gloom* it's definitely not worth the upgrade.



▲ Take a blast of this if you dare.

As for non-AGA machines the jury is out. It wouldn't work on my A620, but it was gorgeous on Mat's A3000 with its box bursting wagonload of RAM and its GVP Spectrum graphics card. If you have the latter specification then it would make a fine investment, but on smaller machines we haven't been able to test it and I suspect 4x4 pixel mode would have to be used on some. As a new game in highest resolution it's worth over 90%, in 4x4 pixel mode it's worth about 60%. As an upgrade it falls short of what I hoped. Mark Sibly, please, deliver *Gloom 2* soon and make it *Gloom Deluxe* with new baddies and a new map! ■

Alan Dykes

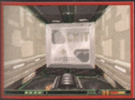
GLOOM DELUXE

A500
A500+
A600
A1200
A1500
A2000
A3000
A4000

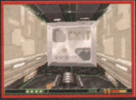
■ workbench version	1.3+
■ number of disks	2
■ RAM	2Mb
■ hard disk installable	yes

graphics	94%
sound	81%
lastability	92%
playability	90%

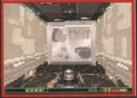
OVERALL
Tarted up version of a great game.
90%



▲ Here we are at the top end resolution with nice sharp colours and well defined objects. Yum.



▲ Move a bit down on the resolution scale and things become less defined. This is 2x2. This is 2x2. Still good.



▲ Whoaa it's low resolution time, and it's all going a bit pear shaped. This pic makes it look good!

Data disk

Super Skidmarks

▲ One of the new tracks in high res.

■ **Price: £14.99** ■ **Publisher: Acid Software ✆ 01302 890 000**

Already a racing classic, can this upgrade face the acid test?

Anyone who's already lined up on the grid in *Super Skidmarks 2* will know that the game is unashamedly excellent, and has already won its place on the Grand Prix podium of all time racing classics. Those of you who are die hard racing fans and spend most of the time in flame-retardant underwear, may even remember that *SS2* was released last May as an upgraded version of the original Blitz Basic offering. It would seem that Skidmarks has now been upgraded more times than Pamela Anderson's big top – so after so much cosmetic surgery, can anyone still see the original point?

Rest assured, my metaphor remains accurate: even after a lot of cutting and tucking Skidmarks is still beautiful to look at. But poke me in the eye with Tommy Lee if I can notice any real cosmetic improvements in this update. According to Guildhall 'it loads better and plays better' but, having had CU Amiga Magazine's original copy mysteriously disappear (give it back Rick, Alan will forgive you), I wasn't really in a position to test this.

Practice lap

For anyone out there without a clue about what *Super Skidmarks 2* is all about, let me explain. There are eight types of vehicle to race with, from the Humble Mini through Porches, big wheeled off road type trucks up to an F1 car and even a supercharged cow!

▲ The Bikini Rally in all its glory ...

These machines each have their own unique handling characteristics which can even be further tailored to suit almost everyone's style of racing. Furthermore, you can also race up to four human players against each other at a time – twice this amount if you have a serial cable and a mate with another Amiga.

So just what so you get for your fifteen notes? Well, there's 12 new tracks, three new championship modes and an uprated program that improves the serial support and the loading routines. Acid have also written a new converter to replace the old one, thus giving better support to Imagine users who want to draw, import and use their own cars, cattle or cantaloupes for racing. But wasn't this already available with *Super Skidmarks 2*? Acid do seem to be gilding the lily as the only really new item has to be the 12 tracks. These do vary from rather simple ovals through the whole gamut of banked curves, crossovers, jumps and even icy tracks which will certainly give the already converted something new to aim for.

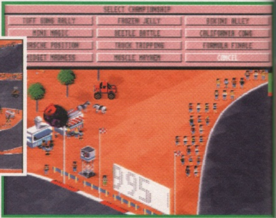
Home straight

Is all this worth it? Well you'll ultimately have to decide but I think that for the cash Acid should really have included a simple to use track editor this time around. After all, the data disk doesn't really add that much for your hard earned cash and as you must already have the game in order to use the data disks, this doesn't really seem a just reward for loyal customers. It's a shame too, because with the inclusion of a track editor the floodgates could have been really opened up for players to race against their friends with renewed vigour on their very own tracks.

Of course if you're a wiz with Imagine then you'll do OK, but what about regular folks like me who don't know their art from their elbow?

Ultimately though you do get another dozen layouts for what is still a classic racing game. And you'd never know, Mark Sibly may be encouraged to produce another version.■

Forrest Sump(ter)



▲ There are three new championships; Bikini, Tuff Going Rally and the Frozen Jelly which is a little slippery.

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A1500
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■ workbench version	1.3+
■ number of disks	3
■ RAM	1Mb+
■ hard disk installable	yes
graphics	87%
sound	84%
lastability	84%
playability	92%

OVERALL

12 tracks for £15. Good fun, not good value

84%

▼ And here are the 12 new tracks that you're paying for along with three new championships.

tracks in high res.

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17 BIT SOFTWARE

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V12-PD welcomes all loyal Amiga users out there!

Hello. How are you? Me? Oh, I'm fine, thanks. I'm here to let you in on a big secret, it's about PD, not just any PD (he says, turning up hos coat collars and uneasily shuffling his hands in his pockets...) It's PD from the boyz at V12. I'm tellin' ya boss, it ain't like no PD ya bought before, it's cheapa, they got more muscle behind 'em than da other families put togetha, and all those services, they must have some serious rackets going, boss I ain't yella but I sure am scared...

Erm, yes, enough of the ganster impressions, let's get down to brass tacks, we sell PD, you want to buy PD, so that's that then. Bye. Hey! Hang on, I haven't even got halfway through the advert yet, better carry on a bit with sone more waffle unless you want a bit of this magazine clear to doodle on...

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This advert is not like the other ones that've been observed by all you PD fans out there. You see we don't put endless lists of disks on ours, simply because it is pointless, you'd only know whether a program was good if you actually owned it already with just the title or a silly 5 word description to go on. So, we don't bother with all that shinanigans, we save the marketing for the Catdisk, and what a Catdisk it is! You may also notice our adverts actually change each month, unlike some...

Where was I, oh yes, Catdisks. Our two disk catalogue is a masterpiece, it's undoubtedly the best and most entertaining Catdisk that 3 first class stamps could buy you. It's a full two disks, with details of our entire 12,500+ disk range on it, not just a few of them, each and every one including full contents listing for all the fred fish disks, scope, LSD legal tools, assassin's , everything! There's no more to shell out for with us! Not only the witty, humourous, handsome listings, but the presentation. An optional Ram installation menu for speeds of over 300K a second on your screen from crunched Ascii text files make this the fastest Catdisk on earth! Compatibility? No problem, this catalogue not only works on every Amiga from WB 1.2 to 3.1, it even detects what Amiga it is in, and enhances it to the system's specs on the fly! Music that'll blow you outta ya socks, samples, full point and click mouse menu system,animation, intro, heck, even an animated advert for our company on it, no effort is spared for your delight!

New offers from our buddies at Midnight Express include 9600 BPS modems for £49.99(!), 14,400 BPS modems for £109.99 and 33,600 BPS modems (ring for availability and price). They can be contacted by the BBS number above with a modem, by voice on 01384 77172, or by mail (no, that old way?) At 21 Tiled House Lane, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 4LG.

New packs we've put together for you this month are the following:

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Ten disks of tutorials and utilities on everything, from workbench, to printing, Artwork animating, music internet and comms, raytracing, you name it, it's here.

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For your catdisks, send 3 first class stamps to the address above, go on, you know what you want to, and start paying a respectable price for PD!

We have a new telephone line for enquiries out of office hours (10am-5pm), it is 0378 135 034. Please ring this line instead of our office line at any other time than office hours.

Greets go out to Dean Kelly of Midnight Express BBS (lets think round and shiny!), Rob Davaiu, Stefan Mansier of Holland, Coca Cola, Frea, of NFA, Michael Carter, Robert Wilkins (it's your lucky day!), and everyone we've forgotten (the ol' memory's not what it was ...).

Flatbed Scanning Services.

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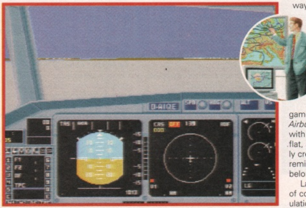
Airbus A320II

■ Price: £29.99 ■ Publisher: Mirage ✆ 01260 299909

You're too slow, you're too heavy and you can't shoot anything. Fans of high excitement steer clear ...



▲ Not exactly the most thrilling cockpit ever eh?

Whilst the Amiga has always had an excellent range of combat flight sims, including *Gunship 2000* and *Knights Of The Sky*, choices for commercial or civil aviation are somewhat more limited with the only previous options being Microsoft's ancient *Flight Simulator* and the original *Airbus A320*. When launched, *Airbus* was hailed as being a totally accurate simulation with prospective pilots able to send away for their own wings and supposedly rack up valid flight time on the sim. To try to retain *Airbus* as king of the 'serious' flight sims, Mirage have now released *Airbus A320 II*, as 'a significant update' of the first game which adds improved flight information systems and navigational displays, uprated autopilot functions and new destinations and numerous other additions.

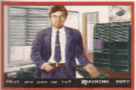
In the hanger

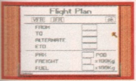
The package contains the software on one disk, a huge Pilot's manual, three high altitude en-route charts and a set of approach charts. Sadly however on close inspection, the documentation proves to be poorly translated and littered with spelling mistakes. To its credit, the manual does contain a wealth of information on the principles of flight but is so poorly organised (the loading and configuration instructions appear several chapters after the tutorials!) that it's necessary to flip back and forth through its many pages to find the information you need to get your plane off the ground.

On loading the program it becomes clear that the quality of the presentation hasn't really improved since the first version. The mouse pointer jerks around the screen clumsily as you attempt to fill out your flight plan with start and destination points, fuel requirements and estimated departure times. Instead of allowing you to pick your destination from a nice friendly menu, *Airbus* makes you dive back into the documentation to find the relevant acronym from its list of over a hundred airports in Europe and the United States and the tables for estimated fuel loads needed to reach them.

Correctly determining the fuel requirements is just one of the many factors that can influence your career as an commercial pilot – in order to extend *Airbus'* life-span, the game features a duty mode whereby you can climb the ladder from a rookie right up to the lofty heights of Chief Pilot.

Promotions and demotions are awarded based on various performance factors including how straight you hit the runway on touchdown and whether you had to use any reserve fuel to reach your destination. Once you've completed your flight plan you can check out the expected weather conditions before moving to the cockpit. In training mode you can set up parameters for visibility and cloud cover but on switching to duty mode expect the worst as the computer selects them randomly. Once the weather report's done you can finally climb into the cockpit and take off.





▲ In the Flight Controller's office you get to fill out a flight plan detailing your starting point, destination, the number of passengers, your cargo and fuel load.

On course

To set up the Airbus' navigational system you have to refer to the charts once more and tap in the relevant co-ordinates for your start and destination points. This done, it's time to fire up the engines and taxi out onto the runway. Commendable as it is to see ambitious projects such as *Airbus* on the Amiga, particularly at a time when software support has never been more important, I'm sorry to say that this misses the mark on many counts. Whilst by no means essential, the in-game presentation screens in *Airbus* are uninspired. Couple this with a cockpit that looks dull and flat, even as drab 3D visuals slowly creep by, and you'll be instantly reminded of games which rightly belong in an age long since past.

Lacking the immediate appeal of combat-orientated games, simulations such as this need more than simple 'fly from A to B' missions to sustain interest. How about trying to land a plane in heavy rain at night with howling cross-winds and a dodgy engine? This would be just as compelling as dog-fighting a Mig. But nothing ever goes wrong in *Airbus*, you just go from one airport to another then back again. Impressive as the flight characteristics of this simulation may be, it's a soulless experience.

Fans of the original *Airbus* will find a more up-to-date suite of controls and instruments, but little else to recommend it. ■

A G Morgan

AIRBUS A320II

A500
A500+

■ workbench version.........1.3+
■ number of disks 1
■ RAM.................................1Mb
■ hard disk installable ......yes

A600
A1200
A1500
A2000
A3000
A4000

graphics	56%
sound	44%
lastability	47%
playability	52%

OVERALL
Dated flight sim. For Jumbo fanatics only
50%

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Adventure Helpline

VAMP

Lullabies and fairy stories are learned at your mother's knee, but Vampyra gleaned all she knows at some other low joint! If you'd like to take advantage of her knowledge why not drop her a line.

Operation Stealth

I have just bought a bracelet from a man on the beach after escaping from the water. I now find myself stuck. After speaking to the receptionist in the hotel I learn that my baggage is in my room. Where is my room and how do I get in as I have no key? And how and where do I get hold of the key?

Cheryl Dawn, High Wycombe.

This isn't the Ritz darling and there are no porters to show you to your room. What you should do is look in all of the rooms until you find your one. Just think of all the fun you'll have stumbling in on people who aren't expecting you!

And why do you want a key? What do you intend doing in your room that you need to lock the door?

If you really insist on going straight to your room then take the lift to the second floor and walk up the stairs to the third. Go east and operate the door on the right.

Dungeon Quest

I've gotten past the dragon, gone west and then south. I've also jumped over to the other side of the idol but I can't get past the door here. There is no sign of a knob, handle or keyhole. I don't know if I've got the ring but I know where to get it. Do I need the ring and how do I get through the door?

Joe James, Shrewbury.

I have a lovely diamond ring which people often admire and say, "Goodness Vampyra, what a lovely diamond ring." Believe me honey, 'Goodness' had nothing to do with my getting that ring!

The exact commands you need are: jump, look door, look box, use sword, east.

Leisure Suit Larry 2

I have landed on the tropical island from the cruise ship. I've been into the jungle and picked the pretty flowers. I've met the Russian agents and I've thrown the flowers at them, but they still take me hostage. Help?

John Howsan, Motherwell.

The answer to your problem is a bit of a drag and you're the one who's going to have to wear it. Yes, it's time to suck your stomach in, stick your chest out and pretend you're a gorgeous girl! What do you think your friends will say? Perhaps they won't be surprised at all.

Having arrived on the island you must travel through the jungle (grabbing a flower on-route) and make your way to the restaurant. Steal a knife and leave. Next location to visit is the Guest Room where you must take the matches and soap. A trip to the barbers is next, where you'll to be turned into a blonde. Then nip back to the nudist beach to find a bikini bottom. This bottom will match up with the bikini top you should have found at the bottom of the swimming pool on-board the cruise ship. Now you've got a costume to change into back at the Guest House. You'll need to stuff the bikini top with soap and then return to the barbers to get your hairy legs waxed. What we girls have to suffer to be beautiful.

Bane of the Cosmic Forge

I have a few questions about this adventure which I would like answered. Are Queequeg and L'Montes useful alive, or should I kill them? What is the mystery oil for? How do I read the Deadman's Log and the King's Diary? Who and where is Snoopcheri? That's the lot, now please help?

Robert Rowe, Beckenham.

Queequeg certainly is useful for he can tell you the answer to many things, if only you knew how to ask the questions which is the whole trouble with this otherwise brilliant game. Talk to him about treasure and mountains and he'll reveal the password to the Captain's Den. (The password is Skeleton Crew.)

To read the Deadman's Log you first need to find the Decoder Ring which is in the second section of the lower level. The ring is on the hand of a skeleton who died in chains.

You cannot read the King's Diary just yet, again you need a special item. Later you'll see this item 'in the stars'. The Mystery Oil is used to ease open a rusty panel which controls a drawbridge – you haven't reached that part yet.

Snoopcheri is a dog which L'Montes has lost. Return his dog to him and he'll reward you. Snoopcheri can be found by using the noxious cheese in front of a mousehole in a certain room.

Eye of the Beholder II

I have explored the dungeons as far as I can and have now gone back upstairs – right to the top floor. I have unlocked doors, smashed lots of bat statues and found a teleporting thing in a hidden corner. You can go through the teleporter three ways. The first takes you to a room with a key and three jewels in it. The floor in the middle of the room is 'soft'. Because there are no doors out of this room I feel sure the exit has something to do with this part of the room. Please help.

P.S. There is also an annoying mouth upstairs which says: "None shall pass without the sign of the Dark Moon". Where do I get this sign from?

Beldar the Brave, Forgotten Realms.

You may be brave, but you ain't too bright. In the niche of the south wall is a red gem. If you also place the blue and green gem in this niche, the wall will open. The soft ground is just the place to plant a seed – a Tropelet Seed. You'll find this item after you get through that magical wall. (Incidentally, Tropelet is an anagram for teleport.)

On level three of the Silver Tower there stands a pedestal with the imprint of a hand upon it. When you place your hand on the imprint you will be branded with the mark of the Dark Moon. It will only hurt for a moment. Be brave and don't cry and I might just come and kiss it better. You wish! ■

If you've got a little problem with your favourite Role Playing Game and would like Vamp to help you out, drop her a line at
CU Amiga Magazine, Priory Court 30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London EC1R 3AU.

SOMETHING WHICH HAS ALWAYS PUZZLED ME IS 'WHY IS "ABBREVIATION" SUCH A LONG, LONG WORD?'

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Snip Tips

You'll notice that last month they stuck me next to Vamp, and yes it's true – when you close the magazine, we do snog (aren't you jealous!). Anyway, please don't forget to send in some new tips, 'cause some of these are getting a bit old!

GLOBDULE

Psygnosis

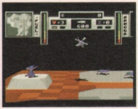
Brian Stevies of Portsmouth gets a free bit of software thanks to this dandy list of world codes for the plop-tastic platformer of old.

LEVEL	CODE
1	HFCNASAKEZDV
2	UDDCASNZEZDV
3	TLPPASNQEZQZ
4	SHPWASBNEZEP
5	UAQNNTOGEZDR
6	EZPSASBREZRX
7	WHQQASSBEZUJ
8	SVQBASSSEZVP
9	SKCUNVNNSBDR
10	FGCONWNHFCDR
11	VGPHOMAASSDR
12	GOEBOQBUSWDR
13	RYQGOYNZGEDR

X-IT

Psygnosis

By pressing Esc on the title screen a password screen will appear. Enter a string of zeros, but make the last digit the level you want. You need to do this quite quickly as the password screen fades quite quickly. Thanks to Paul James from Derby for that one!



▲ How about some tips for Zeewolf 2 then? Go on.

QUIK

Titus

Having trouble with the desert level of this little doober? Don't worry, Mark Bryant of Ilford has just the ticket: On desert level 2, when collecting the clock, walk off the left of the ledge and the level will automatically complete.

BASE JUMPERS

Rasputin

We really are scraping the bottom of the barrel aren't we! Still, needs must when the devil vomits in your lap, and cheesy though this game is the man sent in the cheats and the man wins a prize. And the man? Why James Harris from Devon of course.

LEVEL CODES

ONE TWO BAT MAD
TUT END WAR

SUB CAME CODES

SEU OLD NEW BEU
BOM NAB PAC HOP
FLY RUN

ZEEWOLF

Binary Asylum

With Zeewolf 2 poking its head around the corner, Mr Tony Carrell reminds that the original is still a great game to play, with a few codes to help us along.

MISSION	CODE
5	IMAGO
9	TIBURON
13	ARGUS
17	MARTEN
21	SOCKIN
25	GANNPAU
32	FRAMPAGE

MARVIN'S MARVELLOUS ADVENTURE

21st Century

Again, I know it's an almost hideously old game, but them's the breaks folks. Anyway, Martyn Simmons from Finchley is the man to thank, so, er ... thanks!

HEART OF GLASS
BIG BANG SYSEX
DOING THE DO
ZERO PLUS ONE
SPIKKELS
SO ALIVE
FALLING
ELASTICA
MOTORCYCLE
TWIN PEAKS
APHEX TWIN
MAX GOLDT

DUNE 2

Virgin

Alan Godridge from South Yorkshire has a handy tip for any players finding themselves running out of spice to harvest. Simply destroy one of your full harvesters, and after the explosion there will be at least four times as much spice scattered on the ground in that area. You can repeat this process as many times as you like, and don't worry about the lost harvester – it'll be replaced nice and quickly. Cheers.

SINK OR SWIM

Ocean

Ta to Mr P Doogan from Norfork for these levels codes. A game is on its way to you now!

2	BISHOPMOVE
3	PATSY4KERMIT
4	HOWNOWPOWWOW
5	RINGWORLD
6	TROUGHTON
7	REDPLANET
8	MAGALITHIC
9	MYBREAKFAST
10	TINYBOPPERS
11	LOCKSALORDY
12	HALOWEENVII
13	NEWMODELARMY
14	TIMEPIECE
15	LARRYNIVEN
16	KILLERWHALE
17	BLUEHORIZON

MORTAL KOMBAT

Virgin

Ta to Gary Taylor from Brentwood for this interesting cheat. Just type DULLARD on the Start/Options screen, and should you lose a game, your credits will remain intact.

POPULOUS 2

Bullfrog

As is traditional, every couple of months I pull a handful of codes from my big bag of, er... codes. So here goes:

LEVEL	CODE
583	AGTH
718	UGABAG
658	TUUNAK
701	LLAGAT
767	THHEAG
991	SOAAAT
855	SIUNAT
856	VELLAB
845	HETU
935	WONGAG

And that's it again gang. I hope to have some fresh tips for you next month, but as always, it's down to you readers to keep 'em coming in. Don't forget (how could you?) there's a free Hit Squad game for every tip we print. Be seeing you ...

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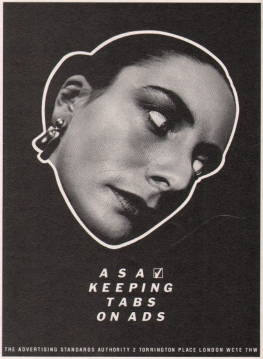
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Horgan's Organ

It's good to see the market still pushing ever onwards, regardless of the current lack of news from Amiga Technologies' HQ. Impulse and Phase 5, the developers of our two headlining review products, might find it in their interests to form some kind of alliance; rarely have two products complemented each other so well. Together the power of Imagine 4 and the awesome speed of the 68060 are enough to make you want to jack in your day job and set about rendering the next 'Toy Story' computer movie on your A1200! Just so long as you can stand that Imagine user interface ...

Elsewhere you'll find all the latest on Acid Software's new Blitz Basic 2.1, along with the first review of Digita's excellent Wordworth 5 packed with stacks of handy features.

The only disheartening sign this month comes from the entertainment side of the PD scene. Looking back two or three years we were flooded with cutting edge demos exposing wonderful new technical tricks, and plenty of good animations from up and coming artists cutting their teeth on the Amiga. Now it seems that innovative band of artists and coders has either lost the edge, or more likely, moved onto higher specified machines that can do justice to their imaginations. Maybe this is one area that will only be rejuvenated when the next generation Amiga arrive. Don't hold your breath, but hang in there.

Tony Horgan
Technical Editor

Sitting comfortably? Now read all about the latest products rated by CU Amiga Magazine's gurus.

● Imagine 4 62
You've got *Imagine 3* from our January cover disk, right? Now see what's in store in *Imagine 4*, the latest update of the people's favourite 3D ray tracing package.

● Blizzard 1260 Accelerator 66
Now you can stoke your A1200 with the amazing speed of the 68060 processor, thanks to this new addition to the famous Blizzard family of accelerators.

● Blitz Basic 2.1 69
Combining the speed and power of machine code with the simplicity of *Basic*, *Blitz Basic* has just received a new update to version 2.1.

● Wordworth 5 72
As word processors encroach on the territory of DTP, *Wordworth* takes a fresh look at the requirements of the serious word processor user and comes up trumps.

● Epson Stylus II....................................... 77
Epson are currently taking all the winning technology from their range of printers and .... putting it into a lower cost versions. The Stylus is one of these up for inspection.

● Hewlett Packard..................................... 77
More expensive than the Epson Stylus, the Hewlett Packard printer also comes under the investigative eyes of a CU Amiga Magazine expert.

● 'Green' Pen Mouse 78
The traditional mouse isn't the ideal input device for computer artists. The 'Green' Pen Mouse hopes to rectify the problem by offering a more natural alternative.

● Screen Beat Super Woofer 78
Feeling in a party mood or want to listen to some good tunes? Give your Amiga's audio the sound system it deserves – feel the bass!

● DataStore 79
There comes a time in a man's life when he gets tired of cataloguing all his old girlfriends' phone numbers. Looking for a new Database? This could be the answer.

● CD-ROM Round-up 80
EMC's Phase 3 CD arrives with a bundle of clips and fonts for DTP and DTV, while The Assassins offer their latest PD game compilations in CD-ROM format.

● PD Scene 82
With PD Scene being taken over by licenceware, it's good news for adventure fans who get a top new game for budget price.

● PD Utilities 87
Boost your Amiga's productivity with another selection of shareware utilities, this month including a couple of timing tools, an Internet guide and a picture database.

Imagine 4.0

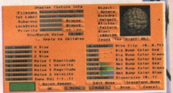
■ **Price: £199.95 (£99.95 upgrade)** ■ **Developer: Impulse Inc.** ■ **Supplier: Emerald ✆ 0181 715 8866**

The great grandad of 3D rendering packages has been upgraded and, interface aside, we like it ...

Does *Imagine* really need any introduction? The 3D rendering system that's been the subject of a unique love-hate relationship with Amiga artists for years has now reached version 4.0. You'll almost certainly own *Imagine 3.0*, since we cover mounted it on our special 3-disk January 1995 issue, so you'll already be familiar with this superb 3D rendering package's combination of immense power and potential, albeit wrapped up in a rather tricky user-interface.

The interface

You might have expected a revamp of the user-interface to have been first on the list of changes for 4.0, but this was obviously not a priority for Impulse. This is a shame, but let's not dwell on the point. Actually, one of the new features does concern the user-interface: you can now run the program in 256 colours on an AGA Amiga or on a Retina graphics board. It's also possible to run in 256 colours on other boards using Mode Promotion, but this can get messy. There's still no standard screenmode requester though, so many users will still be stuck with flickery old interlace mode. The requesters are just the same as older versions.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Txt Label
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Browse
Browse
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Sphere
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Rfictns:
Pattern
Size:
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Top
Right
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Y Size
Z Size
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Noise 1 Velocity
Noise 2 Magnitude
Noise 2 Velocity
Bump Adj (-1..1)
Bttm Clip (0..0.75)
Big Bump Color Red
Big Bump Color Green
Big Bump Color Blue
Sml Bump Color Red
Sml Bump Color Green
Sml Bump Color Blue
Dispersion (0..1)
Quick Render
Edit Axes
Transform Axes
OK
Drop
Cancel

▲ The Attributes section now gives you a preview render of your chosen texture and settings.

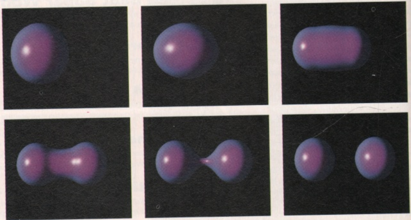
Texture improvements

One of Imagine's major plus points is its incredibly useful texture tools. As before, you can cover your objects in mathematically-generated textures that can be almost infinitely varied to simulate thousands of real world surfaces, or you can wrap them in IFF graphics files. There are improvements in both areas.

Regarding the mathematical textures, the Attributes window now gives you a preview render

Introducing ... blobs!

Just what you've always wanted: blobs! This sequence illustrates one of Imagine 4's most useful new additions. You can now model objects from liquid blobs, which could come in very handy for those tricky organic scenes. In this sequence there are two blobs, initially positioned right on top of each other. As they are slowly moved apart, unlike normal spheres, they stretch as if unwilling to part company, joined by their surface tension until finally they pop apart. See the hand object opposite for an example of an object made with blobs.



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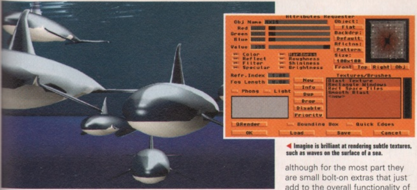


```
Attributes Requester
Obj Name AXIS                          Object:
Red                                     Flat
Green                                   Backdrp:
Blue                                    Default
Value 255                               Rflctns:
                                        Pattern
 Color          Hardness                Size:
 Reflect        Roughness               100x100
 Filter         Shininess               Front  Top  Right  Obj
 Specular       Brightness
Refr.Index 1.00                         Textures/Brushes
Fog Length 0.00          New            Blast Texture
                         Info           Rectangle Windows
 Phong   Light           Dup            Rect Space Tiles
                         Drop           Smooth Blast
                         Disable        <new>
                         Priority
QRender          Bounding Box     Quick Edges
OK          Load          Save          Cancel
```

◀ **Imagine is brilliant at rendering subtle textures, such as waves on the surface of a sea.**

of your chosen texture settings in a similar fashion to Texture Studio. This is a great time saver, and, let's face it, when you're 3D rendering you need all the short-cuts you can lay your hands on. The States section can be used to morph between two different attributes or textures which is excellent for chameleon type effects.

You can now specify more parameters for the IFF brush maps too. Previously these were controlled by setting the levels for colour, bump, filter and reflection. The amount of parameters here has been doubled to include the following: specular, hardness, shine, brightness, fog length, index of refraction, ambient light and even roughness.

Miscellaneous extras

Additions in other areas include the ability to import pictures into your scenes for use as backdrops (previously a backdrop had to be specified separately from the Globals section of the Action editor). These backdrops now appear in the 3D preview window, so you don't need to render the scene to get an idea of how the backdrop will fit in with the rest of the scene.

There are plenty of new bits and pieces to make life easier dotted throughout the program, although for the most part they are small bolt-on extras that just add to the overall functionality of the program. These include some new tools, among which the smoothing controls are some of the most useful, helping to mask the edges of the polygons that make up each object.

A few additions have also been made to the lighting functions: Soft shadows can be cast by tweaking the parameters of a light. In effect this makes multiple clones of the lightsource and places them very slightly apart from one another, resulting in a number of overlapping shadows being cast. This leads to rather over-extended rendering times, but the effect can be worth it. You can also view the scene from any lightsource or object.

Conclusion

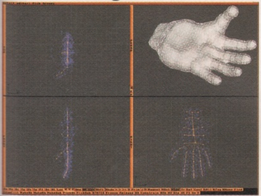
Imagine 4 is an incredibly powerful program, but if you were expecting it to suddenly morph into an intuitive and friendly system you'll be disappointed. It's high time the user-interface was completely overhauled and brought up to date as this is the program's only main drawback. It's absurd that you still can't select your working screenmode from a list of all those available, as you would with any other current application worth its salt. The inadequate 24-bit graphics support is also disappointing.

However, if you can get by with its old-style interface, *Imagine 4.0* presents heaps of very tasty features at your finger-tips, and the resulting images and animations can be stunning. In most areas it matches the quality of its rivals and despite the level of the competition (remember, it's up against the likes of *LightWave* and *Cinema 4D*) it surpasses them in many ways.

Newcomers will find it tricky, but the enhanced features combined with Imagine's traditional strengths; the bones system, morphing and brilliant texturing it's worthwhile. If you've plenty of RAM and are not afraid of spending sleepless nights struggling with the interface, then *Imagine 4.0* is the business. Now, isn't it time you bought that 68060? ■

Martin Bibby

Blob modelling



Obvious uses for these include psychedelic lava lamps and any scene or animation that requires dripping gunge of some sort, not to mention trippy abstract animations. However, with a bit of imagination you can put them to good use modelling all kinds of natural objects. This model of a hand took just a couple of minutes to knock up by combining a number of blobs. The results, when suitably textured, are far more realistic than you would normally expect from a similar model crafted from conventional 'primitives'.

Imagine: an overview

Imagine began life many moons ago as a package called Silver and was soon re-christened Turbo Silver. Sometime later it changed name once more to become Imagine. Despite a few quirks, it's become the most popular 3D rendering system among Amiga users mainly because it delivers professional quality results without demanding too much in the way of processor power and other system requirements when compared to some of its rivals. That's not to say that you'll have much fun trying to render an animation on a 68000-based machine. A 68030 or better processor is pretty much essential for serious rendering, and it's hardly worth bothering at all with anything under 4Mb of RAM. A good 10Mb of RAM is generally sufficient for most work.

One of Imagine's major advantages is its States and Bones features, which allow groups of objects to be joined and animated in a realistic manner. Another advantage is its ability to produce mathematically generated textures that can create incredibly lifelike and varied surfaces.

IMAGINE 4.0

A500
A500+
A600
A1200
A1500
A2000
A3000
A4000

system requirements:
4Mb RAM, OS 1.3, hard drive
recommended: 8Mb RAM, FPU, 68030 processor or faster.

ease of use......................65%
This is where it falls down, thanks to a customised user interface.

performance......................90%
Hampered by the interface, but the results can be amazing.

value for money..............79%
At 5p under £200 it matches Cinema 4Don price and is £200 less than Real 3D 3.0. It's not cheap, but it certainly delivers.

OVERALL
A flawed masterpiece with plenty to offer.
87%

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M150 TIFFANNY I Think We're Alone Now
M171 MADONNA - (Like a Virgin)
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G535 BLACK DAWN brillant graphic adventure
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G560 IMPERIAL WALKER -Base on STAR WAR games
G567 STARBASE 13 (2D) Bril like MONKEY ISLAND
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G659 MR MEN OLYMPIC (2D) many event to complete
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G667 GOLF (2DISK) One of the first & decent GOLF
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G682 BANDIT MANIA - Brillant fruit machine demo
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G689 GUN FIGHT (not A500(1.3)
G690 THE REAL POPEYE 64 (a500 1.3 only)
G692 SYSTEM DEFEND-Brillant Defender clone
G698 AMIGA-BOY-Game boy emulaor + tetriz
G732 DETHELL IN SPACE. Recommed.
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G771 STAR WOID (2 Disk) brillant Thrust
G772 UN-SENSIBLE SOCCER very similar toSensible scoccer games. RECOMMEND
G773 FRUIT MANIA -Brillant Fruit machine.
G774 TRICKLE TREAT -like DOOM on the PC
G775 FOOT-BALL MANAGER-new version
G782 SOLO ASSAULT 3D like Wing Commander
G783 SEED OF DARKNESS-Brillant graphic adven
G784 NANO FLY Superb explore game RECOMMEND
G785 THE GREAT GOLD RAID- very addicted
G787 ANT WAR V1.9 (LATEST) not 1.3
G788 ZENO-MORPH -Great grahic
G789 TASK FORCE very good MIND SHADOW clone
G790 GREEN FIVE Amazing 3D graphic like
G791 PROFFESIONAL BINGO CALLER
G792 MARTIAL SPRIT like Street fighter II
G798 6 EXCELLENT CARD GAMES collection
G809 BLITZ 2 fast action shooting games
G810 EXIT 13 Brillant puzzle
G811 TEMPORAL MISPLACEMENT-graphic adventure
G812 ADAY AT THE RACE-V.Goodhorse racing games
G820 BOULDER ORIGINAL with 80 level
G821 BOULDERDASH cave/level Construction kit
G822 BOULDER COLLECTION 2/3 160 level (2disk)
G839 BOULDER PACK with 640 level on 8 disk
G860 ALIEN NET WORK-new Spacing invader
G862 BATTLE FORCE excellent text adventure.
G863 GNU CHESS the best chess with 10 level
G866 SWORD OF YIGG Graphic adventure
G867 POWER-TETRIZ for 1 or 2 player
G868 SUPER SMASHING TETRIZ
G870 CHESS II & CHECKER One of the best around must for all CHESS or CHECKER player
G871 GRAVITY FORCE 2 1 or 2 player thrust clone

G872 SCHNEBITZ Commercial quality puzzle games
G875 DELEXE GALA v2.3(new) add new feature &bouns gamme + 2 player RECOMMEND. get it now
G876 THE KRILLIAN INCENDENT like ELITE2/Epic
G878 QUANTUM-Maze colect & escape type games

NEW 101 GAMES PK 3

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G879 RAG TO RICHES - like MONOPLY
G884 WIPE OUT-mindless blading gamae
G885 GODZILLA Another shootem up
G886 SUPER MEGA FRUIT- All new Fruit Machine
G888 DRIVING MANIAC 3D (fill vector likeindi500) car racing- very fast. RECOMMEND
G889 PLANET FALL - Luner Lander clone
G891 BUCK TOOTH ADVENTURE Very good multilevel shoot/collect em up RECOMMEND
G892 PENGO 2- Maze type games. Recommend
G893 SUPER OBLITERATION Blast asteroid verysimilar to PANG 2 lot of weapon RECOMMEND
G894 SUPER INVASION II -New SPACING INVADER
G897 THE SHEPERD Brillant POPULUS clone. REC
G898 ALIEN GENOCIDE (2) Shoot aliens set in space.
G899 PUCKMAN. One of the better PacMan arround.
G900 SUPER-BATTLE ZONE 3D (not WB1.3)
G901 M*A*S*H a (ANTWAR 2) play very similar toLEMMING & WORM, with load of Weapon (Brillant)
G904 LAST SOLDIER (2) multilevel platform games
G905 CBBERTECH (2) excllent ALIEN BREED Clone
G906 HANGMAN any one for a game?
G907 ACE SPACE nice Platform games
G908 COLOURMANIA slide/Klatriz type puzzle games
G910 HARRY-HADDOCK- Brillant platformer games
G912 MANGLE FENDER -Brillant, Smash up othercar/tank ect to win. extremly addicted. get it
G913 ARCADE GAMES CLASSIC Vol 1 & 2 (2d)
G914 HELICOPTER-play like Desert strike
G915 COW WARS. Very addicted 2 player games
G916 ISLAND -Play like Monoply.
G919 C@P THE LOT Pro Latest Lottery preditor
G920 LOTTERY PROFFESIONAL This version use
G921 MONOPLY. (board games) The best version
G922 JET WILLY 3 - excellent platform games
G923 FLAMMING ENGINE-Superb car racing
G924 POWER MACHINES. Grahicaly brillant shoot
G925 SUCIDE-MACHINE Operation wolf style
G926 ZAXXON 3D Superb C64 3D blaster games
G927 BOING V3. Great platformer. recommend
G928 PUNTER-Animate horse racing games
G929 ARCADE JIGSAW (2d) include LION KING
G930 WHEEL CHAIR GLADITOR-Very fun to play
G931 NIMBLE-Brillant New arcade puzzle.
G933 BLACK DAWN 3- THE NEW BEGINNING (2) Superb 3D adventure. RECOMMEND
G934 R3 ROCKET (NEW)very good rockets games
G935 BATTLE SHIP- the finest PD version
G936 LAST LAP - Fast car racing

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E024 EASY SPELL II improve your kid spelling
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E026 WORDS can help you solve the crossword
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E041 KID ALPHABET display all alphabet letter
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E043 MATH MASTER teach/test you more on maths
E044 STEAM ENGINE V2 graphic & tutorial
E045 PETROL ENGINE tutorial & animate graphic
E046 GAS TURBINE ENGINE tutoria & anim graphic
E047 STIRLING ENGINE tutorial & anim graphic
E050 DREAM FOR ANGEL explain the meaning of dream E051 INVISIBLE WORLD brillant recommend
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E056 WORM HOLE simple game ideal for children.
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E098 BACK TO SKOOL vol 2 in education programe
E099 BACK TO SKOOL vol 3 & games. RECOMMED

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E101 WORLD GEOGRAPHY world with map & text.
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E109 MR MEN OLYMPIC (2D) many event to complete
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E164 PAINT IT (not A5001.3) latest COLOURING BOOK
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E171 CHILD FAVOURITE-Education prog
E172 ANIMAL LAND-Learn about animal
E175 FRANTIC GUIDE TO COMPUTER (2D) brillant &
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must for startrek fan contained 100s of picture from the
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E185 WORKBENCH 2/3 GUIDE On line help/Complete
E210 LEARN & PLAY 3 Latest Education & Games
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E241 COMMS GUIDE V1.1 beginner modem user
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AGA240 LOTTERY WINNER hope fully will improveyour chance of winning a jack pot..GOOD-LUCK
AGA241-258 AGA GAME-GALORE AGA 01-18 lot of games
AGA251 PACKMAN AGA -the best pacman yet
AGA252 ROCKET PD - Super thrust clonebrillant graphic for 1 or 2 player
AGA253 REAL DEMO stunning special effect
AGA254 DIRT AGA Brillant 256 colour effect.
AGA255 DELIGHT EXPLORE exclient demo
AGA256 KEFEREN AGA Demo lot of effect
AGA257 MINOMIST RAVE great rave music.
AGA258 OXYGENE Fantastic demo
AGA259 INTEL-OUT another very good demo
AGA260 SOMEJUSTIC94 Demo of the monthbrillant whirl effect. RECOMMEND
AGA262 TO THE DEATH very good STREET-FIGHTER clone with very good graphic.
AGA263 GEORGE GALAXO (2disk) brillantmultilevel shoot/platform game. RECOMMEDN
AGA265 MISSILE OVER ZENON (2disk) Brillant3D missile commander with fantastic graphic
AGA266 TEAM-HOI DINO PLATFORM excellent dinoplatform Note:this disk was a commercial games
AGA274 MUSIC 2 SURVIVE 2disk 8 excellentmusic master piece. well worth getting
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AGA base disk magazines. RECOMMENDAGA disk magazine topic.demo/music
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AGA297 BOMB PAC Extreamly good to play
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AGA310 FEARS (2d)- dooms clone demo
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AGA313 RAM JAM THE TASTE DEMO.very wicket demo.
AGA315 ILEX MYSTIC. New AGA demos
AGA320 KLONDIKE 3 (4disk) Hd require & 2meg+we aslo have a list of 25 cards for above.
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AGA322 HOT-BABE 2 (2) 18
AGA323 HOT-BABE 3 (2) BEFORE
AGA324 HOT-BABE 4 (2) ORDER ANY
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AGA426 ORIGIN 2 (2 DISK), Amazing

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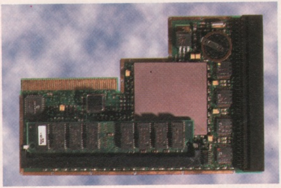
Blizzard 1260

■ **Price: £599 0Mb** ■ **Developer: Phase 5** ■ **Supplier: Gordon Harwoods © 01773 836781**

The awesome Motorola 68060 CPU arrives and we test drive the fastest Amiga 1200 ever.

Accelerator cards have always been amazingly popular for the Amiga 1200. They became essential as Amiga users graduated into using more and more powerful and resource hungry applications. The 1200's stock 14MHz 68EC020, however, is way under powered. 68030 cards are commonplace and for a long time this has been the limit of how fast an Amiga 1200 can go. Until the oven-on-a-card Falcon 68040 arrived, that is. Now, with the Blizzard 1260, the base model Amiga goes faster than it was ever thought possible.



Here at last

Last year, hopes for a 68060 accelerator remained partially dashed as Motorola broke promise after promise of delivery dates for the 68060 CPUs. The 68060 is a departure from the usual manufacturing technology of the previous CPUs. It runs with a 3.3 Volt power supply rather than the usual 5 Volts. That means that even though this latest generation 68000 series CPU has over two and a half million transistors on board, the heat generated is substantially less than the 68040. This is a great advantage as the Falcon 68040's main problem was excessive heat generation.

The 1260 doesn't come cheap. £600 pounds is a fair bit more than the entire Amiga 1200 is worth and it's likely only very speed hungry Amiga users could justify this much money to go this fast. Still with an air of excitement in the office, we pulled it out of its box to give it a test run.

Hardware

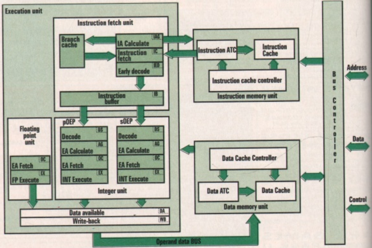
The Blizzard 1260 is extremely wel constructed. It is made up of a high tech four layer printed circuit board with very small surface mounted logic components. There is also a very large surface area in the centre made up of five square grey centimetres of the largely unmarked 68060. Also, unlike the Falcon, the entire business is mounted on the underside of the card like 68030 accelerators.

There's no cooling provided for the CPU at all, though with the large surface area it didn't seem to get as hot as 50MHz 68030s do. The inclusion of a battery backed-up clock is a bonus and gives the Blizzard an edge over the Falcon which doesn't have one.

The now standard Blizzard feature of an edge connector for the DMA SCSI module is also present. It uses the same unit as the Blizzard 1230 Mark IV. Even more good news is that SCSI add-on also has another SIMM socket which takes up to a 128MB SIMM (we should be so lucky) while even the standard SIMM socket takes up to a 64Mb unit. However,

The 68060

The 68040 introduced massive 8K data and instruction caches as well as drastically reduced cycle time for existing instructions. This made the 68040 the largest leap in performance in a generation. The 68060, however, incorporates many of the modern CPU architecture tactics used in the very fastest of today's modern processors. This means that the 68060 is miraculously able to execute three instructions for every clock! The built-in FPU performance is even more astounding, mainly due to the so-called 'superscalar' implementation of two separate parallel execution pipelines. The bottom line is that the 68060 is fast. As fast as any processor capable of running 68000 series code is going to get as sadly this is the end of the line of the Motorola 680x0 series. Here's a diagram of its workings for posterity.


Execution unit
Instruction fetch unit
Branch cache
IA Calculate
IAG
Instruction fetch
IC
Early decode
IED
Instruction buffer
IB
Floating point unit
EA Fetch
OC
FP Execute
EX
pOEP
sOEP
Decode
DS
EA Calculate
AG
EA Fetch
OC
INT Execute
EX
Integer unit
Data available
DA
Write-back
WB
Instruction ATC
Intruction Cache
Instruction cache controller
Instruction memory unit
Data Cache Controller
Data ATC
Data Cache
Data memory unit
Bus Controller
Address
Data
Control
Operand data BUS

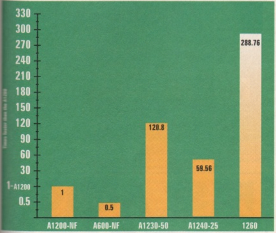
because the CPU is so large, it intrudes on the space where a SIMM would protrude from the SIMM socket. That means a double sided SIMM will not fit.

Fitting the card was no more or less difficult than any other 68030 accelerator though it was a good deal easier than the Falcon! As with the Blizzard 1230 Mark IV, the unit can be entirely disabled by holding down the '2' key during a reset. A good thing too as you wouldn't want to be constantly removing and inserting £600 worth of hardware, another bonus point.

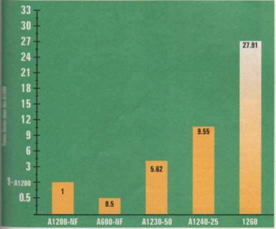
The only jumper on the entire card is to set MAPROM on or off. If enabled, the card will automatically copy the contents of the Amiga's ROM into fast RAM which will provide a good speed up to operating system functions at the cost of 512K of RAM.

68060 library

Unlike standard 68030 accelerators, there's some software which must be installed on the host machine before using the card. This takes the form of a 68040.library and a 68060.library. The 68040 library will detect if there is a 68060 present and direct that library to be used instead. Setpatch actually installs the patches whereby 68040 support is added. The reason for this is that the FPU units built in to the 68040 and 68060 are not full implementations of 6888x FPU code. The patches intercept any use of unimplemented instructions and execute the special 68040/68060 FPU code needed. Apparently this way is quicker, though when programs make heavy use of the unimplemented 6888x instructions, performance will suffer greatly.



This graph taken from AIBB measures the Blizzard 1260's performance with a typical ray tracing algorithm using floating point instructions (FPU code). Tellingly, it reflects how poor the 68040 is at standard 6888x code with it's unsupported instructions being emulated. The Blizzard patching software comes to the rescue allowing the patched 68060 FPU code to perform the task nearly 300 times quicker than a stock Amiga 1200!



This graph measures the industry standard CPU benchmark 'Dhrystones'. Again compared to the stock A1200, it's a rough gauge of CPU oomph at crunching non math related tasks. Note that it's not as spectacular as the 68060's maths performance as shown in the trace test above.

For this reason the disk provided comes with a rather poorly documented 'CyberPatcher'. This amazing software will actually patch any programs running to use 68060 FPU code. The effective performance boost is amazing as we found with our *Imagine 3.0* cover disk. It's recommended that the patcher be dropped into WBStartup. Also provided on the disk is a replacement for the 68030 MMU using Enforcer debugging tool. A very welcome addition. There's also a developers program to detect instructions the 68060 does not support.

Finally a new C: command called CPU060 controls the 68060's modes such as Caches, copyback and superscalar mode which are all very comprehensive. However, I would have liked to have seen a GUI CPU preferences utility too and better documentation of the utilities provided.

How fast?

Now down to business, how fast is the Blizzard 1260? It's very fast. After installing in my own (normally 28MHz 68020 kitted) machine, I was shocked at the drastically reduced boot time (a few seconds) and the speed that icons appeared when clicking on a drive from Workbench. The trouble is that the CPU is so very much faster than the Amiga's display is capable of moving so that in some instances it might appear that the machine isn't as fast as it actually is. Rendering a saved scene in *Imagine* rapidly dispelled that illusion. A quick render took but seconds to arrive and a full render lingered just a fraction of the time it did before. These things are subjective though. What's needed is some cold hard benchmarks and for that I turned to the PD bench marking tool, AIBB (see left).

To avoid a guru, AIBB needed to be told that the CPU is a 68000, the FPU a 68882 and then I force fed the clock speed. Normally very reliable, AIBB didn't quite know how to deal with the 68060 without the manual overrides. Fortunately after this it was well enough behaved to create a 'module'. The module is included on this month's cover disk in the AIBB directory. Normally you can wait around for half an hour for AIBB to perform all those tests. The Blizzard 1260 finished it in a ridiculous 1 minute 45 seconds which caused to us double check that it actually did perform the tests!

In order to test for any compatibility problems, I ran virtually every program I could from my hard drive. Not one program caused a problem except that Power Computing's *Breathless* crawled along slower than a standard A1200. Strange.

There were only a couple of serious hardware incompatibility problems that we found. Firstly the unit didn't work in the MicroniK tower. We were unable to contact the developers about the problem before going to press. More importantly, the Blizzard 1260 was completely incompatible with the HiSoft PCMCIA Squirrel SCSI interface. We immediately contacted HiSoft and they informed us they have a 1260 for testing and were working on the problem. Squirrel owners would be well advised to call to HiSoft about a software update before considering a 1260.

Speed freaks

The Blizzard is a high quality accelerator and currently the fastest around by a long shot (barring the unreviewed Falcon 68060 variant). However, the entire unit (with 8Mb RAM) will cost in the region of £850. A staggering sum that would go far enough to buy an entire new setup equipped with a 68030 accelerator. As such it's one for speed demons only. However, Amiga users wanting something more than just a 68030 unit will find it expensive but until budget 040s come along it's better value. ■

Mat Bettinson

BLIZZARD 1260

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A2000
A3000
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Shapeshifter v3.2a
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Breathless (AGA)
Wow! Latest Doom clone on the Amiga, one of the best looking so far.

Term 4.5 (HD) (LHA) (3)
Comms program, better than [illegible].

VMM v3.2 (HD) (MMU)
Running out of memory? Well not any more - now you can use virtual memory on your Amiga, but you do need a lot of hard drive space. (needs MMU)

Iconian v2.6 Beta
Latest version of the best icon editor available to date.

Apple II Emulator (HD) (020) (2)
Emulator of the classic computer, includes games such as Wolfenstein.

Magic C64 1.1 (HD) (020) (2)
Stunning C64 emulator, comes with some of your favourite classics.

Speccy Emulator v2.0b
The latest Spectrum emulator for the Amiga - play all your favourite old classics.

Executive v1.2 (HD) (020)
Makes your Amiga's multitasking much faster. Received [illegible] in CU Amiga.

Image Studio (2)
Brilliant image processing utility, similar to Photogenics, obviously not as good, but great for the price.

Remdate v2.10
Calendar, reminder and filofax all in one. Brilliant for those who lack memory.

RO v1.03
Brilliant Opus style file manager.

MCP v1.10b Beta 2 (MUI) (HD)
Multipurpose utility. Received [illegible] in the January issue of CU Amiga! ESSENTIAL for all WB users!

Damage Wolf v2 (HD) (LHA)
Another superb Amiga Doom clone. This one doesn't need AGA but is definitely recommended. [illegible]

Gravity Force II v1.10
Latest release of arguably the best PD game available on the Amiga.

The Big Red Adventure (AGA) (LHA) (HD)
A demo of the coming adventure. The demo comes as an LHA file and needs to be unarchived. Also HD needed.

Balls! Update (AGA)
This new version features all 52 weeks of lottery data and comes with a new program for syndicate members.

MUI v3.1 (HD) (LHA) (2)
Shareware version of this ultimate interface creator, needed by Mosaic.

Tpaint (AGA)
Excellent 24 bit paint program now available.

Dala Horse (AGA) (HD) (4MB) (4)
If you've got the requirements, this is the best demo release I've seen this year. AMAZING

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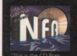

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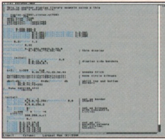
Blitz Basic 2.1

■ Price: £34.99 ■ Developer: Acid Software ■ Supplier: Guildhall Leisure ✆ 01302 890000

AMIGA SUPERSTAR

Fancy making tons of cash, becoming a household celebrity, making your fortune with a superb game? Not everyone can do it, but if you want to try look no further ...

Those of us that have been with Commodore's machines since the early days will remember the built-in *Basic*, with the advent of the Amiga, Microsoft made their first and only Amiga product: Amiga *Basic*. Unfortunately, Amiga *Basic* turned out to be incompatible with later machines and Commodore decided not to commission a new version of this popular and relatively easy language. It wasn't until AMOS arrived that the new Amigas had a well liked and fully featured *Basic* language.



▲ Looks like a handful all right. Here we are in the Blitz Basic editor, TED, lashing up some nice OS illegal demo graphic effects.

AMOS hit

AMOS was a hit and after being cover mounted by various Amiga publications, it swamped the language market so that even today Amiga PD and Shareware still has a large contingent programmed in *Amos*. Europress have unfortunately ceased support for the language though there's still quite a few *Amos* programmers holding the fort including commercial games developer Vulcan Software.

However, in 1993, Mark Sibly of New Zealand based company Acid Software brought a new *Basic* to the Amiga. *Blitz Basic* was designed from the outset to be capable of programming commercial quality games and to launch it Sibly demonstrated just what could be done with his new language: *Skidmarks* followed by *Guardian* arrived. At the time of *Blitz 2.0* it received tumultuous applause but several years hence, I had grave concerns that an update was not going to prove it anything more than a reasonable games programming package.

KO
T-STONES
BAZOOKA
WORMS

▲ You could program a game like Worms, have it ported to all other formats in existence and make a fortune. You could also be afflicted with a fascination for concrete donkeys, like Worms' inventor and Blitz programmer Andy Davidson. Lesson: you don't have to be mad to program in Blitz, but it helps.

Minor update

Blitz Basic 2.1, as reviewed here, isn't so much the next version as an minor update to address 2.0's shortcomings. The main list of new features includes complete on-line AmigaGuide help, restructured library handling, bug fixed parameter parsing and complete AGA and OS 3.0 support. *Blitz 2.1* retains the ability to run on the most basic Amiga with no extra memory and running from floppy drive only.

Hard drive users can elect to use more comprehensive and larger 'acidlibs' modules which give added commands and functionality. *Blitz* does not, however, come with a hard drive installer. This isn't a large problem though since comprehensive HD installation instructions are provided.

The *Blitz* programming environment is a tightly coupled and well thought out affair. Entering the actual *Basic* programs is done in The Editor or TED for short, which also comes in basic and enhanced versions for different systems. It's pretty much your usual text editor with normal text marking and clipping commands though annoyingly it doesn't insert and delete lines like modern editors you need to use a menu/key command instead o insert or delete a line. Being dedicated to *Blitz*, TED has a nice feature of highlighting *Blitz* commands when a line is returned. One function I fell in love with was its automatic handling of subroutine bookmarks. Simply type in a subroutines title or label with a '.' preceding and magically TED partitions to create a lister on the right hand side showing the name of the subroutine. Later clicks on the names in this list will automatically move TED's cursor to this routine.

Debugging

The debugger is complicated but that's because it's essentially a machine code monitor and users with no knowledge of the workings of 68000 assembly code will be completely lost. For them the only hope is to try and figure out why the code failed and fortunately full tracing and stepping is possible. One criticism I can lay at *Blitz 2.1*'s door is that a number of the examples given refused to compile for me. I was unceremoniously dumped in the debugger and occasionally the Guru came to visit in any event.

When ploughing through the much improved, ring bound *Blitz 2.1* manual (though the pages tend to fall out), at first *Blitz* seems like a fairly standard implementation of the *Basic* language until you find that you'll need to think about what type of variables are needed and define them correctly from the start. IE decide if a numeric variable's possible ranges will fall within the range of a byte etc. It gets worse until *Blitz* starts to resemble a cross between *Basic* and some strange form of 'C'. This is not a *Basic* for the tinkerer.

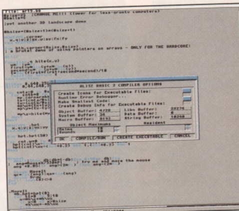
The future?

While *Blitz* is quite capable of creating some impressive graphic effects without resorting to in-line machine code (which *Blitz* supports very well), it seems that many of the examples provided are laden with this sort of thing. This was not a problem a few years ago but with the Amiga destined to move away from the 68000 to the Power PC CPUs, new users would be ill advised to start learning 68000 assembly at this late stage.

Do it all

So what can *Blitz* do when it comes down to it? It's more a question of what can't be done and that's very little. It's quite possible to remain so-called 'OS compliant' and create applications with standard Gadtools GUIs or even MUI. With this knowledge it's a wonder more utility and application programmers don't use *Blitz* in this area as I found the development cycle to be quick and easy with only a generic knowledge of *Basic* to start me off. Resulting compiled executable sizes were quite small and execution speed very rapid indeed.

On the other hand, kick in to 'Blitz Mode' and you begin a whole new ball game. The Operating System is swiftly ejected and some of *Blitz*'s powerful graphics handling functions come in to being. These enable double buffering, parallax scrolling and 50 trillion objects to be thrown around the screen in the best style of flashy machine coded Demos. Games programmed with *Blitz* could not be identified as being programmed with *Blitz* unlike their unfortunate *Amos* counterparts.

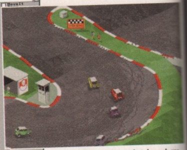


```
;CHANGE ME!!! (lower for less-grunty computers)
;yet another 3D landscape demo
; a brutal demo of using pointers on arrays - ONLY FOR THE HARDCORE!
; try me and move the mouse
```

BLITZ BASIC 2 COMPILER OPTIONS

Create Icons for Executable Files:
Runtime Error Debugger...
Make Smallest Code:
Create Debug Info for Executable Files:
Object Buffer: 4728
System Buffer: 24
Macro Buffer: 8192
Libs Buffer: 22274
Data Buffer: 0
String Buffer: 10240

▲ Here we're altering the compiler settings before compiling the program for the final time into an executable. The debugger can be switched off and the size optimisation turned on. Tiny and fast code will result.



▲ If you wanted to, and were talented enough, you could always program something like Super Skidmarks in Blitz Basic. But you might have to bleach you hair in a very disturbing manner like Mark 'Sibbo' Sibly of Acid Software. Lesson: you don't have to look like a wild hipster to produce a hit game, but it helps.

Illegal AMOS

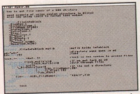
Amos is infamous for it's OS illegal practices. This is obviously not unusual for games software but with *Blitz*'s capability to program proper OS compliant applications with virtually all the same capabilities that would normally be written with 'C' compilers, *Blitz* holds the crown as the all round Amiga programming package.

What sort of Amiga user would *Blitz Basic* be suited to? The answer depends on what you envisage yourself doing with *Blitz*. To be honest, if you intend to program utilities and serious applications exclusively, I'd still recommend that you opt for 'C' or even our December *Amiga E* cover disk. Using these packages would make it easier to work from Amiga system programming documents. Those who want to create graphic based games and demos or even utilities with heavy graphics usage, *Blitz* is your man. If you want to program games alone, *Blitz* is most definitely your package.

Be prepared to encounter a slight learning curve even if you are familiar with *Basic*. Especially if you've had no encounter with the more low level aspects such as having to worry about how to store your data. I was dubious of *Blitz*'s OS compliant ability but after having used it to create some programs to send out *Arexx* commands to other applications, I foresee that a relationship with *Blitz* will continue. Being a great fan of *Arexx* but constantly annoyed with its execution speed, some of my largest and slowest scripts can be re-written in *Blitz* to the same functionality. *Blitz* may not appear to have the same level of support in the UK as *Amos* but with a regular *Blitz* Users Magazine (amusingly called BUM for short) and a real live *Blitz Basic* Newsgroup for Internet users, it does have more serious bare bones support.

If it wasn't for *Blitz* we wouldn't have Team 17's *Worms*. That's one of the highest praises that can be afforded and now that I'm satisfied of its serious applications and Mark Sibly's renewed development interest including plans for a new super 3.0 version, *Blitz Basic* looks to be the Amiga's No.1 all round programming package. Not only amateurs but for professionals alike. *Blitz Basic 2.1* is a very well put together package that deserves to do well. Recommend unreservedly. ■

Mat Bettinson



▲ A small example of a real OS compliant program in Blitz Basic, thoughtfully provided with the package.

Interpreted vs Compiled

Here it's worth noting the difference between interpreted and compiled languages. The old Commodore *Basic* and even the Amiga DOS scripts and *Arexx* language are 'interpreted'. That means that each line is read in, one at a time, by the language and executed. The benefit of this method is that a change can be performed instantly and the program rerun to see the result. The down sides are that anyone needing to run the program must have the full language installed to run the program and speed is usually far below what is required to write full programs.

There's is where 'compiled' languages come in. Here the entire program will be read in and converted to a stand alone bit of code that the Amiga can run without having the original language installed. The process is called 'compiling'. Modern languages all use this method though it does require that between every change, the program must be recompiled before being run.

***Blitz* makes the process very easy and quick. The last menu in TED is called 'Compiler' and the first function is 'Compile and Run'. All the programmer needs to do is select this and *Blitz* will compile the code and run it all in one hit. During this development time, the programmer will usually have the compiler options set in a particular way. This means that there will be no size optimisation which would be used in the final compiling of the program as it takes longer. Likewise the run-time debugger will be enabled so that any errors will be safely trapped rather than a visit from the Guru when something goes wrong.**

This is another concern with a BASIC compiler such as *Blitz*. Because it's so low-level and capable of generating small and fast code, error checking is nothing like it is with interpreted languages. One programmer error can cause the entire house of cards to fall down. The Debugger during the development phase will catch these errors though when the programmer is teleported to the debugger with a shock it will all seem quite technical.

BLITZ BASIC 2.1

A500
A500+
A600
A1200
A1500
A2000
A3000
A4000

system requirements:
Any Amiga. Enhanced for HD users.

ease of use 85%
Starting off easy and grows more complex as your ambitions grow.

performance 93%
Super Skidmarks and Worms. 'Nuff said.

value for money 95%
35 quid for package that's created the current No 1 Amiga game?

OVERALL
Great value and very capable.
91%

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SHAPE SHIFTER v3.2 is the much-raved latest version of the … Apple Mac emulator. You need MAC ROM's and System 7.5 to use … [020+][WB 2.1+][4 MB+][HD Recommended]
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CHEATS v2.1 000's of cheats here [2 Disks] [WB2+]
VARK CLI TOOLS 9 Loads of great CLI tools.
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NUCLEUS PRO DEMO wow! A demo of a forthcoming …-end and interface creator. Allows you to create AGA front-ends for … drives or CD's with ultimate ease. The best ever. Try this!! [AGA]
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FIASCO v1 superb database system - easy to use [WB2+]
ULTRA ACCOUNTS 2 decent accounts package [WB2+]
DEMOMANIA v1.80 Complex (you've seen their demos!) have … this demo creator for you to create scene demos! [WB2+] [2 Disks]
MAGIC 64 wow! At last - load both D64 and T64 files into a C64 … with ease - features make it the best C64 emulator there is! [AGA]
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BLITZ BASIC v2.1 a demo of the forthcoming programming lan- … behind Skidmarks, Blitz Bombers, Gloom etc [WB2+]
XIPAINT v3.4 demo of a good AGA paint package [AGA]
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PRO GREYHOUNDS v1.1 gaming program [WB2+]
PRO LOTTERY 96 new Lottery predictor [WB2+]
SENSIBASE world soccer listings!! [WB2+]
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VARK INTERNET INSTALLER all you need to get onto an … provider like Global Internet etc [WB2+] [3 Disks]
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MARATHON 2 player action game
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TORQUE a superb version of Uridium [AGA]
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TOTAL SPECIES another 3D-type adventure [WB2+]
ALIEN FISH FINGER a shoot-em-up game
ULYIMATE MANAGER addictive footie management sim.
NESTLE NESQUICK promo platform game [AGA]
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D227 SCOOPEX "ALIEN" Scoopex are BACK in the '90s with a good demo release! [AGA]
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D231 AXIS "PICTURE BOOK" must be one of the best demo releases for many months, comprehensive. [AGA] [4 Disks]
D235 MELON DESIGN "BAYGON" superb cartooney style demo!
D236 EMBASSY "THRILLED" Assembly '95 release [HD][2 Disks]
D237 SILENTS "FRUIT MACHINE" superb Assembly '95 demo!
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D247 RAZOR 1911 "FALKORV" wow! [4 Disks] [AGA] [HD] [4MB]
D248 SCOOPEX "ISO" they're back! Get it now! [2 Disks] [AGA]
D249 STELLAR "AURORA" new from Stellar! [AGA]

- the following are from the recent Party 95....

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D251 FOCUS DESIGN "SLOWMOTION" [AGA] [2 Disks]
D252 THE PARTY 95 INTROS
D253 POLKA BROS. "NO" [HD] [AGA]
D254 TRSI "CYBERLOGIK" [AGA] [HD] [2 Disks]
D255 RAGE "RABIES" [AGA][2 Disks][HD]
D256 EMBASSY "CORONA" [AGA][2 Disks][HD]

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DEADLOCK 9 superb disk magazine by Anathema/Narcosis
NFA WORD 5 disk magazine from NFA [AGA]
NFA WORD 6 disk magazine from NFA [AGA]
NFA WORD 7 disk magazine from NFA [AGA] [2 Disks]
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UFO : FINDING THE TRUTH 3 paranormal and UFO stuff
ALIENS CONFIDENTIAL 2 UFO and paranormal guide
WEATHER GUIDE [3 Disks]
LUCIFERS "UNHOLY INNOCENCE" [2 Disks]
LUCIFERS "WICKED GRIMOIRE" bizarre cult stuff
LUCIFERS "BOOK OF SHADES" [2 Disks]
MAGNETIC FICTION demo of the story collection
KIDS DISK 7 another under 5's program
SCOOPEX "ARTCORE" Doom-like gallery slideshow! [AGA]
NFA SOURCE 'N CODE 2 AMOS source 'disk' magazine
TITANIC II interactive database on the Titanic disaster [2 Disks]
HISTORY OF THE WORLD CUP all explained [3 Disks]

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U318 VIDEOTRACKER DATA data files for Videotracker. [4 D]
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U521 ADDRESS PRINT v4 Store addresses and print them to labels.
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U564 EXOTIC RIPPER v3.1 module and sample ripper. [WB2+]
U576 BLITZ BLANKER V2.5 Blitz Blanker is another tool that requires the services of MUI (U499). Modulerised screen blanker. [WB2+]
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U628 ICONIAN v2.91 Superb AGA icon editor. [AGA]
U634 FRODO v1.5 The very best C64 emulator for the Amiga. Relive the old games with this. [WB2+] [020+]
U635 DOPUS UTILS 2 Loads of utils for Directory Opus 4/5. More scripts, Arexx routines etc etc [WB2+] [Dopus]
U636 TYPING DEMON Learn how to type very quickly !
U638 ESSENTIAL AMINET 7 Aminet utilities. [WB2+]
U648 HD GAMES INSTALLER 4 loads more installers for your favourite games. Obsession Pinball, Powerdrive etc [WB2+]
U649 enLOCK Lock program for a hard drive [WB2+]
U650 BOOKIE BEATER Beat the bookie at his own game! [WB2+]
U653 SKIDMARKS 2 CARS 4 cars for the AGA Skidmarks [2 D]
U656 SUPER DMS v2 A powerful interface for DMS [WB2+]
U658 DOPUS v5>>>>v5.11 UPGRADE Upgrade DOpus [WB2+]
U670 TERM v4.5 00 Term is the most comprehensive communications package in PD, rivals any commercial release. [3D]
U671 TERM v4.5 030 version for 030 processors [3D]
U672 ORGANISER BITS a collection of supplements for Digita's Organiser. [needs Digita Organiser]
U674 ZXAM SPECTRUM EMULATOR v2B NEW Spectrum Emulator. You need an **AGA Amiga or 020+ processor.**
U677 EASY CALC v2B superb spreadsheet program [WB2+]
U679 AREXX GUIDE v2A want to learn Arexx? [WB2+]
U680 MOSAIC v2B latest version of the Web browser. [WB2+] [TCP 4]
U682 VARK'S CLI TOOLS VOL 8 50 latest CLI tools - get this!
U683 IMAGE STUDIO v2.2 latest version [WB2+] [2D] [HD] [020+]
U684 ESSENTIAL AMINET 8 new and decent uploads here [WB2+]
U499 M.U.I. V2.3 Create GUInterfaces. Needed for Mosaic. [WB2+]

MORE GAMES

GM11 MEGABALL AGA absolutely superb commercial quality bat and ball game for AGA computers. Get it! [AGA]
GM22 MISSILES OVER XERION probably the best defender-type game on the Amiga. Arcade quality. [AGA][2 DISKS]
GM58 BLACK DAWN II a popular 3D adventure
GM60 BAZZA AND RUNT a definitive platform game with superb graphics. Must be seen by all platform fans. [AGA]
GM67 SCRABBLE the classic board game
GM78 STARWOIDS thrust and oids mixed [1MB] [2 DISKS]
GM83 ZOMBI APOCOLYPSE II an Operation Wolf clone with guts, gore and more! Worth playing! [AGA]
GM88 MONOPOLY the classic board game
GM93 KLONDIKE III for hard drive users [HD] [4MB+] [WB2+]
GM97 TOP HAT WILLY an Amiga "Jet Set Willy" rip-off. Addictive!
GM105 DYNAMITE WARRIORS 2 another bomb clone
GM118 CHANEQUES yes, two please!! A Lemmings type game. Direct your little men (with different skills) to the end. [2 Disks]
GM125 KELLOGS LAND WOW! The best PD platformer ever! [AGA]
GM127 ZAXXON superb! The C64 classic now comes to the Amiga!
GM131 SUPER MEGA FRUITS a good Fruit Machine game.
GM132 SAMURAI SHOWDOWN this is an amusing Street Fighter clone. Good! [AGA]
GM137 MEGABLOCK V2 the best Tetris games on the Amiga.
GM138 CYBERMAN wow! A 3D pacman clone. Very decent indeed.
GM140 INTERNAL COMBUSTION great skidmarks-esque multi-player racing game
GM141 MADHOUSE a graphical adventure game [2 DISKS]
GM147 DELUXE GALAGA v2.51 must be the best PD shoot-em-up ever made! Get this if you have an A500/A600 (non-AGA).
GM150 ROCKETZ V2.25 superb AGA only 2-player thrust/shoot-em-up game. One of the most addictive mutli-player games ever! [AGA]
GM164 CYBERGAMES excellent! A street-fighter clone with gore! This is probably the best beat-em-up games in the Public Domain. [2D]
GM169 MASH Similar to Team 17s new Worms game. A subtle cross between Lemmings and Cannon Fodder.
GM174 TANKS! excellent tank-war sim
GM176 ALIEN GENOCIDE err. A Operation Wolf clone? [2 DISKS]
GM178 DOOMER a good Doom clone for the Amiga [AGA] [HD]
GM180 CARNAGE blood, guts and gore and more!
GM183 PSSST AGA remember Psst on the Speccy? Well this is the Amiga version!
GM184 SCREECH another car racing game
GM185 BOARD GAMES Cluedo is the main game here
GM187 FEARS 2 AGA wow! Much better. This is a demo of the finished commercial version! More aliens.
GM188 CARD GAMES DELUXE A program that allows you load and use your Klondike cards! Blackjack and another on here [3 Disks] [2MB]
GM191 CHILD ADVENTURE AGA not as bad as it sounds! A graphical adventure to solve the mystery to clear your name [4 Disks]
GM224 BATTLE DUEL AGA battle duel is a SUPERB multi-player artillery type game. [AGA]
GM226 GLOOM A demo version of the forthcoming Doom clone. [AGA]
GM227 WAR OF THE WORLDS 4 A virtual reality program! [AGA]
GM238 LAST LAP v1 Excellent racing game for one or two players.
GM239 ULTIMATE STAR TREK great strategy game [2 Disks]
GM242 PSYCHUEL Alien Breed style shoot em up [WB2+]
GM245 THE PYRAMID GAME A puzzle platform game. [2 Disks]

F1 SOFTWARE

F1-14 TOTS TIME £3.99 education programs for kids under 5
F1-31 POWERBASE v3.3 £3.99 superb database program [WB2+]
F1-33 POWER PLANNER £3.99 personal organiser [WB2+]
F1-41 GRAND PRIX MANAGER £3.99 run your own grand prix racing team. 1994 season. Recommended. [AGA]
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F1-83 IMAGE COMPRESSOR £3.99 for AMOS coders [WB2+]
F1-84 WORD PLUS+ PRO v1.3 £4.99 Want to know a word - get this! Used to sell for £14.95! [WB2+]
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F1-87 LEGIONS OF DAWN £4.99 hard drive version
F1-101 INTRO TO DOS/WB 2 £6.99
F1-102 AURIGA £4.99 very decent Strider clone
F1-107 GREENIES £3.99 a 3D maze romp affair for 1/2 players
F1-108 PUSH AND PULL £3.99 clear the nasties by pushing various blocks. Superb graphics. AF said "Arcade winner". 1/2 players [WB2+]
F1-109 BEGINNERS GUIDE TO WB3 VOL.3 (TOOLS) £3.99 learn more about WB3 with this volume [WB3+]
F1-110 FALLING DOWN £3.99 one of Amiga Format's recent AMOS top thirteen winners - a decent strategy game [AGA]
F1-111 RETURN TO ZANTIS £3.99 another one of Amiga Format's recent AMOS winners - a link-sequel between RELICS of Deldroneye and the forthcoming, long-awaited RELICS 2. Point 'n Click adventure [AGA]
F1-112 AMOSZINE 9 £5.99 latest in the AMOS disk mags. News, views, tips, tricks, source and more for the AMOS programmer. [WB2+]
F1-113 AMOS AGA EXTENSIONS £3.99 wow! It's here. The program that a recent PD library was advertising in EVERY Amiga magazine. It is here for £3.99. The AMOS AGA Extensions allows you to load and utilise AGA pictures within AMOS. Cut blocks, pack screens etc. [WB2+]
F1-114 AMOS DIALOGUE PROCEDURES £3.99 another decent AMOS set of extensions. Use psuedo intution techniques, GUI interfaces, GAD Tools with ease within AMOS. [WB2+]
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F1-117 EPSILON 9 £3.99 this is the game that will show the power of GRAC version 2. A graphic adventure which is the sequel to Star Base 13.
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F1-119 PARASITE £3.99 Black Dawn 1/2 plyrs
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Do you admire the commercial games cush as Monkey Island and other adventure games and wish you could program your own version? With the Graphic Adventure Creature v2 you can easily make a point and click adventure game like Epsilon 9 or Relics of best ever selling title!

NEW RELEASE [WB2+] [NEEDS AMOS PRO]

G.R.A.C. VERSION 2 £6.99

With the Graphic Adventure Creature v2 you can easily make a point and click adventure game like Epsilon 9 or Relics of Deldroneye. This is the long awaited version 2 which contains many new features such as IFF Anim support, fast character scale and zoom, player multi-switch (switch from character to character on screen), over 30 new script commands, an improved script editor, 32 background objects and many more. A superb release - GRAC is F1's best ever selling title!

NEW RELEASE [1MB+]

DISK COMPRESSOR £6.99

This program allows you to add "virtual space" to your hard drive. By using compression routines you can expand your hard drive by upto 50%. I.e. if you have a 200MB hard drive, increase the space up to 280MB (example). Various compression routines to choose from. Very easy-to-use interface, device packer and statistics program. No need for a new hard drive!

OUT MARCH 1996 [HD][2MB+][WB2+]

MAGIC PAINT BOX £6.99

Magic Paint Box is a superb new paint program for the under 10's. Excellent front end, 84 different painting tools and the ability to print full colour pictures direct from the program to any colour printer. Over 80 different paint functions! "...like a breath of fresh air" wrote Amiga Shopper. "for pure entertainment value, this wastes commercial packages". Amiga Shopper **96% STAR Buy** in November '95.

[1MB+][WB2+]

BLACKBOARD v4 £8.99

This excellent image processor now comes with an extensive fully featured manual. Online help routine, new file formats, new edit facilities, rotate pictures to any angle in 3D, new buffer routines with upto 99 pictures in RAM, new extensive pref links, thumbnail images, mash functions and new GUI frontend! **90% STAR Buy** in Amiga Shopper December '95

[2MB+][AGA]

DMC £6.99

Want an easy-to-use but powerful disk magazine creator? Look no further. If you have a club, association or want to produce your own diskmag, then get this. Allows the use of clipart and many more features.

NUCLEUS £8.99

Digital Software present "Nucleus". Admired by much of the Amiga press 95% in Amiga Shopper - this excellent 'front-end' creator allows you create an interface for a disk, hard drive or CD. Comes with a superb GUI design creator. Load in an AGA picture and go! Manual included. Superb!

NEW RELEASE [1MB+][WB2+]

MAGIC WB SECTION

MAGIC WORKBENCH AGA	[AGA] [HD]
MAGIC WORKBENCH v1.2p	[WB2] [HD]
WB Extras volume 1	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 2	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 3	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 4	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 5	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 6	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 7	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 8	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 9	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 10	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 11	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 12	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 13	[2 Disks]
WB Extras volume 14	[2 Disks]

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Wordworth 5

■ Price: £69.99 ■ Developer: Digita International ■ Supplier: Digita International ✆ 01395 270273

AMIGA SUPERSTAR

Wordworth is back and it's kicking butt as far as word processors go. This latest version has all the features that last one lacked and more.

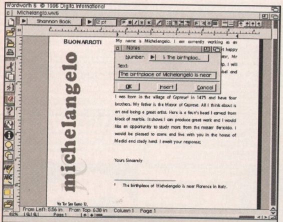
We may only have two high end word processors to choose from on the Amiga, but we what we lack in quantity, we make up for with quality. In the latter part of last year, *Final Writer 4* was released to high acclaim from CU Amiga Magazine. Now it's the turn of *Wordworth 5* to come under scrutiny.

Wordworth is a program so embedded in Amiga history, it's hard to remember an Amiga being released without this mighty word processor. Yet past versions of *Wordworth* lacked a number of key features. No *ARexx* and no style sheets to name but two. With version 5, this has all changed. New features abound and with several key features addressed, from what I've seen, *Wordworth* has finally come of age.

I have now been using a pre-production version of *Wordworth 5* solidly for more than two months and in that time have grown to appreciate it more and more. I have to admit to being one of the old guard who like to use text based word processors but the fact that this review is being written in *Wordworth 5* will tell you that I have now relinquished my fear of trusting a graphics based word processor. The change of heart is due in no small part to the many new features to be found in *Wordworth 5*.

Trying to single them out in order of importance is impossible but style sheets certainly made an impression on me. Many of you will have already had a taste of style sheets in *Wordworth* 4SE, but these have been beefed up significantly for version 5. A style sheet, for those who have never heard of them, is a function which enables you to apply a series of attributes to a piece of text in the one operation.

You might, for example, have a series of captions for pictures in your document. Up until now, you had to remember what each of these individual attributes were so each caption looked the same. Now all you have to do is create a single style sheet called Captions and then apply it to each caption in your document.



Wordworth 5 © 1996 Digita International

Michelangelo.ww5

My name is Michelangelo. I am currently working as an

Notes

Number: 1: The birthplac...

Text:

The birthplace of Michelangelo is near

I was born in the village of Caprese¹ in 1475 and have four brothers. My father is the Mayor of Caprese. All I think about is art and being a great artist. Here is a faun's head I carved from block of marble. It shows I can produce great work and I would like an opportunity to study more from the master Bertoldo. I would be pleased to come and live with you in the house of Medici and study hard. I await your response;

Yours Sincerely

¹ The birthplace of Michelangelo is near Florence in Italy.

From Left: 5.56 in From Top: 6.38 in Column 1 Page 1

▲ You can now choose between two types of notes in Wordworth 5. Endnotes that are inserted at the end of your document and footnotes which are inserted at the foot of the page.

Style sheets

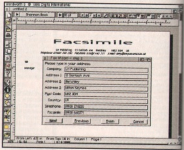
There are two types of style sheets in *Wordworth*, paragraph based and character based ones. A paragraph based style sheet applies its attributes to one or more paragraphs while a character based style sheet can be applied to any number of characters without affecting the paragraph attributes of the text. This enables you to have a normal style sheet that is applied to all the text in a letter and a character based one for special pieces of text within that letter such as people's name.

Applying these style sheets to your text is dead easy. There are many methods you can choose from but one method that will have tongues wagging is the drag and drop approach where you simply drag the style sheet out of the floating palette and onto the text. As easy as that.

Style sheets can also be applied to pieces of text created by other *Wordworth* functions including contents generation, notes and so on.

ARexx

Another of the big headline features is *ARexx*. This addition enables you to create two types of *ARexx* scripts. One is called an *ARexx* Macro and this would be used for tying together one or more *Wordworth* functions in a script that can be called up to perform repetitive tasks.



Fax Wizard – step 2

Please type in your address.

Company: UK Publishing

Address 2: Bletchley

Address 3: Milton Keynes

Country: UK

▲ A new feature in Wordworth is the Wizard. It can create pages for you with or without your help.

The other type is the Wizard. This is basically the same type of script except that the aim of each wizard is to help you create documents interactively. *Wordworth* comes with a few examples that help you create a fax template, invoice, letterhead and so on.

The thing that struck me about these wizards is how easy they are to create. Let me say now, that I know nothing about *ARexx* or about programming but within an hour of getting a wizard from Digita, I had created my own interactive wizard that created a page, put lines where I wanted, typed out some text for me asked me a load of silly questions and much more.

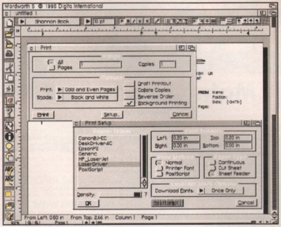
The possibilities are endless and although I feel Digita should expand on the available *ARexx* commands, the feature is still a lot of fun to play with.

Making notes

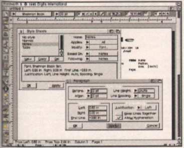
Notes is yet another of the new features in *Wordworth 5*. There are two types included, Endnotes and Footnotes. Using them is simple enough. The idea behind them is that you find a place in your document where you want to place a reference number

Wordworth - the Highlights

- **Drag and Drop Style Sheets**
- **Interactive Wizards to help you create your documents**
- **Background Printing frees up the page in seconds**
- **Direct support for LaserJet 3 and above printers**
- **On-Line Help**
- **Template support**
- **Import Final Copy/Final Writer as well as many PC formats like RTF**
- **TextEffects**
- **Endnotes and Footnotes**
- **Custom Bullet Points**
- **Auto Correct to correct as you type**
- **New FontEffects such as configurable Small Caps and Super/Subscript characters**
- **Tables with import support for TurboCalc files**
- **Powerful Find and Replace including the font attributes as well as the text itself**
- **Contents and Index generation**
- **Mail Merge multiple records on a page**


Wordworth 5 © 1995 Digita International
untitled 1
Shannon Book
10 pt
Print
All
Pages
Copies
Print:
Odd and Even Pages
Shade:
Black and White
Draft Printout
Collate Copies
Reverse Order
Background Printing
Print
Setup...
Cancel
Print Setup
CanonBJ-EC
DeskDriver4C
EpsonP2
Generic
HP_LaserJet
LaserDriver
PostScript
Left
Right
Top
Bottom
Normal
Printer Font
PostScript
Continuous
Cut Sheet
Sheet Feeder
Download Fonts
Once Only
Density
OK
Cancel
From Left 0.60 in
From Top 2.66 in
Column 1
Page 1

▲ **Several new print enhancements have been added including the ability to print documents in the background and improved support for LaserJet 3 and above printers.**


Style Sheets
No style
Normal
Notes
Table
Name
Notes
Applies
All
Modify
Font...
Based On
Notes
Following
Notes
New
Copy
Del
Font: Shannon Book 8pt.
Left: 0.60 in Right: 0.00 in First Line: -0.60 in.
Justification: Left, Line Height: Auto, Spacing: Single
OK
Apply
Paragraph
Before
After
Line Height
Auto
Line Spacing
Single
Left
Right
First Line
Justification
Left
Keep Lines Together
Allow Hyphenation
OK
Apply
Cancel

▲ **Style sheets which first appeared in version 4SE, have been beefed up and are now among the most powerful in any document creation package.**

which matches the same number attached to a note either at the foot of your page or at the end of your document.

Notes are separated from the main text by a line which is inserted automatically. This line can be the whole width of a page or only half the width. The style of the line and its endings can also be configured. The text for the notes can be automatically formatted by *Wordworth* using attributes from a style sheet.

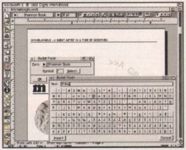
Background printing

Of more significance to Amiga owners who have to suffer horrendous print times, is going to be the background printing feature. This is part of a number of new features under the title of QuickPrint.

Background printing simply tells *Wordworth* to save the file to memory and immediately releases the document so you can carry on editing it. When you consider that some pages can take hours to print, having the document released within seconds is a great move by Digita. Do remember though that the page will still take some time to print although now the print process won't stop you from carrying on with your work. LaserJet 3 and above owners also get something to play with. With most printers, if you use the printer's internal fonts, the choice is rather limited. *Wordworth* though is now able to create printer fonts from those fonts used on-screen and then download them to LaserJets. This means that although the first print may take a while to output, every page thereafter that uses those fonts will print much faster because it's using the fonts downloaded to your LaserJet.

As you can see, all these features are new and there are lots more. Ruler tools sees a lot of new buttons. One called Bullet Points for example, lets you take a paragraph and add a user configurable bullet at the click of a button. The bullet used can be selected from a panel which shows you all the characters available to a particular font.

Also in ruler tools are two buttons for indenting a whole paragraph left or right. In other words, if you want a paragraph to be shifted left or right in relation to the other paragraphs, it can be done quickly using these tools.


Wordworth 5 © 1995 Digita International
Shannon Book
Bullet Point
Font
Shannon Book
Symbol
Select...
OK
Bullet Font
Cancel
Insert

▲ **Bullets can now be added to a paragraph using a button in Ruler Tools. The type of bullet can be chosen by the user as can the font.**

Yet another new function is one for placing *TurboCalc* spreadsheet files as a table in *Wordworth*. This can be used two ways, one where a new table is created or another where the information is placed into an existing table. This feature was still in testing stages as I wrote this review, but for those of you using *TurboCalc*, it will prove to be a very, very useful feature indeed.

Importing Final Writer files

It is well known that many Amiga owners have both *Final Writer* and *Wordworth*, so it makes sense for Digita to have created a *Final Copy/Final Writer* import filter.

Like most filters trying to open a rival product's files, it works but there is generally a trade off in what elements it imports. The example I had, imported text OK, but other formatting support was still lacking.

What a bargain?

Overall, *Wordworth 5* is a big improvement on *Wordworth* 3. It's more than worth upgrading to. What I would like to see from now on is a beefing up of the current crop of features as well as some more specialist tools added and of course, a wider selection of *ARexx* commands.

Nobody can say *Wordworth 5* better than *Final Writer* or vice versa because they both still support a number of useful features that the other does not. The one you choose will depend on what specialist features you need as both programs handle the basics very well.

However, Do bear in mind though that to upgrade from *Wordworth* 3.1 only costs £29.99 and that makes *Wordworth* a real bargain for existing users. ■

Larry Hickmott

WORDWORTH 5

A500
A500+
A600
A1200
A1500
A2000
A3000
A4000

system requirements:
Any Amiga with Workbench 2.04 or above and 3Mb of memory. Two floppy disk drives or a hard disk.

ease of use.......................92%
With ARexx Wizards to help you, using Wordworth couldn't be easier.

performance.....................89%
Very good text and graphics handling. Could do with a few more drawing and document layout tools though.

value for money..............93%
With an upgrade price from Wordworth 3.1 of less than £30, version 5 is a bargain.

OVERALL
Great new features and low upgrade price.
94%

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Who invented it? The old Commodore, its bosses, ideas, mis-kes etc. The Escom rivival and much more.

miga Environment
hat is your Amiga? Why is it so special? What is the scene"? Who are Amiga Technologies and what do they do?

ne Amiga Hardware
side, outside, ports, chips all explained

Vorkbench and DOS
Vhat is it? Using it. Data and file management, Workbench vironment tips, the CLI, advanced WB and CLI tricks

rogramming
MOS, Blitz, assembly, C, Amiga E and AREXX examined

ecome an Artist Overnight
aytracing, 3D, animation, bitmap drawing analysed

ecome an Amiga Music Maestro
Octamed explained, MIDI discussed, musicians interviewed

Getting Your Words into Print
Word processing, Desk Top Publishing, Printers, Clipart etc

Surfing the Super Information Highway
Intro to the Internet, Surfing the Internet, WWW design, Amiga Internet Providers, Amiga Internet software. The Amiga Technologies Internet pack taken for a test drive.

General Arena
Emulation, Operating Systems, Storage Systems, Amiga in Business, Multimedia etc etc etc

The Amiga Future
Where is the Amiga going? Amiga Technologies' plans, Amiga visions, possible industry comments. Amiga "Visions" - the companies that will bring us innovative products in 1996. We interview Intersect Developments, Fields of Vision and more.

And Finally
Credits, thanks and anything we have forgotten!

Also!

- **Full version of DOpus v4**
- **Full version of Octamed v5.04**
- **Other full programs (TBC)**
- **'Test Drive', exclusive version of Wordworth 3**
- **Limited Version of PPaint v6.4**
- **'Get Connected' to the Internet - all you need, all ready to go!!**
- **Essential PD to Get Started!**
- **Exclusive stuff from various user groups and companies!**

The world's first truly AGA multimedia, interactive compact disc. Designed for beginners, new users through to intermediate (and higher!) levels, it helps an Amiga user understand more about their computer and what it is capable of. Covers many subjects from raytracing to the Internet and from programming to music. Many 'well-known' experts and Amiga-buffs are contributing to this CD. They offer help, answers, tips, tricks and more. Want to know how the experts create a WWW page? Global Internet show how! Stuck using Internet software? John Kennedy explains all. Also contains forums, opinions and a look to the future with top Amiga developers. Comes with a FREE bonus beginners section with commercial programs, commercial demos and all the PD you need to Get Started, all ready-to-run. If you have an AGA Amiga with a CD player, then get this. PC multimedia CD's are here!

And Starring!

Kev and Gareth Craft	- Amiga MIDI	- MIDICraft
Steve Bye	- AMOS Programming	- F1 Licenceware
Ed Wiles	- Octamed in Depth	- Octamed Expert
Larry Hickmott	- DTP, Printers, Clipart	- LH Publishing
Peter and David Clarke	- 3D Animation	- The Room Upstairs
Simon & Co.	- 3D Architecture	- V.S.I.
Mark Thomas	- WWW Design/future	- Global Internet Ltd
Danny Amor	- The CD and German Mkt	- Freelance Writer
Jason Jordache	- Bitmap Graphics	- Freelance Artist
Dale Hemenway	- Animation	- Dalemation
David Taylor	- Storage, Emulation	- Freelance Writer
John Kennedy	- Internet etc etc etc!	- Paragon (Freelance)
Jeremy Ford	- PD Section	- Ground Zero Software
Justin Joyce	- Amiga DTV	- Axiom Video Services
Andrew Campbell	- AMOS 'Hands-on'	- AMOS Programmer
Richard Bannister	- Music (Soundstudio)	- MED Users Group
Spencer Jarvis	- Imagine 'Hands-on'	- Imagine Users Group

Above are four screen grabs an early version of the Get S CD interface: The main page colour windows, the floating tionary and an animation ex

ADVANCED AMIGAGUIDE - AAG

- **Fast Rendering of 8 bit (256 colour) Images**
  practically instantaneous display of 256 colour pictures even on stock 020 Amiga. There can be more than one 256 image displayed at one time with the palette sharer.
- **Is a Stand-alone Platform Unlike Other "Hypertext" Products (HTML Language etc)**
  does not need other programs such as MUI or AmiTCP to run
- **Allows Text, Picture and Gadget Links as Opposed to it's Pre-desessor**
  click on a picture or animated gadget and move to another page. Retrace back to your original position.
- **Allows the use of Sub-Modules Runnable as Commands**
  for instance, play and show an animation as a command by clicking on a button! The commands can allow you to "link" to anything and anywhere. Click a link and enable the dictionary etc.
- **Multiple Fonts & Add Colour from 256 Colour Pallete**
  you can use as many different fonts as you like. Just use the normal Amiga bitmap fonts in any size! You can also add colour to the text from a pallete of 256 colours. Highlight a word - add colour. Highlight different links - add colour!
- **Super Bitmap Window**
  cater for AmigaGuide files which take up more lines than is available
- **Downward Compatibility**
  is able to read old AmigaGuide format (and soon HTML pages)
- **Drawing Tools**
  AAG allows you to create lines, boxes, circles and colour them by using simple commands such as @DRAW 10-40,25-60 or @LINE 10,30,35 - using co-ordinates and lengths.

Advanced AmigaGuide (or AAG) is the language that resides behind the Get Started interface. It offers m enhanced and powerful features over the old AmigaGuide language. To the left of this box is a list of the f tures AAG contains. AAG could be used in a multimedia product, interface front-end, on-line help progra disk magazine and much more. Contact us for licence details. AAG should be available by May/June 199

The Get Started CD should be available from most good CD mail order and high street Amiga retailers. All rights reserved. Contents may be subject to change.

Out March 1996 [AGA Machines]

German version due early April.

£29.99

AAG - GUI OS VERSION

Advanced AmigaGuide (AAG) can be a direct replacement for the current AmigaGuide. In a native OS GUI version it looks very similar to the existing format, however it is very different. The language allows more flexibility such as the co-ordination of text, images and gadgets in upto 256 colours and can add more powerful features such as HTML decoding or use of multiple fonts on a page. AAG can also read old AmigaGuide files. It also uses the same techniques for writing ".GUIDE" files (see second picture): @NODE, @LINK, @COMMAND etc are the same as the old format, but new commands have been added such as @IMAGE, @REM, @MOD, @SECTION, @PAGE, @COLOUR, @BOX, @DRAW, @LINE, @GOTO, @CENTRE etc etc. This allows the user to quickly understand the simplicity of writing the documents/pages.

Contents & Index

'ALL YOU NEED' SECTION

FREE

The 'all-you-need' section contains a carefully se ed collection of read-to-run material: This section encompasses full (or limited) commercial programs such as **Octamed v5.04**, **Personal Paint 6**, **Directory Opus 4** and **Wordworth 'Test-Drive'** with commercial demos and superb public domain as chosen by Ground Zero. There are exclusive collections from M.U.G., the Imagine Users Group, MIDICraft, AMOSzine authors and Cloanto. The PD con are highlighted and examined within the Get Started in face. There is also a superb "Get Connected" area: all need, ready-to-run/install (all explained in the Get Sta interface!!) to get onto the Internet. Global Internet will be p viding the access, so immediate 'net surfing! There are m more reasons to buy Get Started - it's like 3 CD's in Multimedia CD, Internet Software CD, Commercial Softw

ZOOM

It's HERE! Zoom release 2 - now in ready-to-run and DMS format! Do you want the latest PD CD-Rom that contains the latest PD to January 1996? Contains the greatest and latest PD from two superb PD libraries. The interface must be the most easy to use CD interface on any CD. Coded by the co-author of the superb new Get Started CD - just point, read about the disk and click to extract. Superb and very easy to use. The contents have also been updated so you get all the latest PD until early January 1996 and loads more as listed opposite. Comes with an on-line help routine, multitasking search routine and hotkeys function. If you want 650MB's of the latest PD, then look here! Two formats - ready-to-run and the DMS format (for shops etc). The pictures below show the enhanced DMS interface in action.

Superb value CD-Rom at only £19.99 **NEW!**

NEW - RELEASE VER-

- ✓ **New Search Routine**
  the multi-tasking search/find will seek file names or number
- ✓ **New 'Hot-Keys' Function**
  just press 'S' for search or 'E' for extract, "Help" for help!
- ✓ **Restyled, Remastered**
  new help and information guide, restyled artwork! Superb!

- **Greatest & latest PD from early 1995 - January 1996 : Utils, games, demos, slideshows, education, disk mags and more!**
  - including most of this advert and loads of great PD software
- **NEW! 100 Klondike/Card Games Deluxe Cardsets**
- **NEW! The complete Active Software Pro Pack collection**
- **NEW! All the Professional Sound Samples [50 Disks]**
- **NEW! Over 25MB+ of read-to-view/use Magic WB icons etc**
- **NEW! Special 'programming' themed area**

NEW! READY TO RUN & DMS

NEW to ZOOM release 2 is the easy-to-use, ready-to-run format as first demonstrated in NFA AGA Experience. Allows the direct use of PD straight from the CD-ROM!

F1 LICENCEWARE

volume one - FI-01 to FI-100

Sick of the run-of-the-mill old PD CD releases containg collections from pre-1995?!? This CD contains the complete collection of F1 Licenceware titles from F1-001 to F1-100. Over 100 titles or more than 200 disks! This CD is worth well over £500, if the disks were bought separately. There is something for everyone on the CD - games, utilities, tools, professional clipart and music, beginners guides, educational programs and much more. Some superb material is contained within this CD-Rom: Blackboard v3 (image manipulation), Ultimate Quiz 2 (general quiz), Word Plus Pro (originally valued at £15!), Fortress (strategy God game), Relics of Deldroneye (voted best PD game ever by Amiga Format), ERIC (voted second best PD game ever), Powerbase (databse program), GRAC (superb 'Monkey Island' style adventure game creator with 000's of copies sold on floppy), Introduction to WB (best selling F1 Title), Absolute Beginners Guide to AMOS, Junior Artist (kids paint package) or Tots Time (one of many kids educational programs). Use some of the professional music within your games, with no extra charges. What about the clipart for your DTP documents? AMOS programmers have a field day with this CD - AMOSzine, guide to AMOS and AMOS supplements. Something for everyone. With a very easy to use AmigaGuide© interface with 80% of the programs running straight from the CD. Remember that the programs are commercial, with copyright owned by F1 Licenceware. **All programmers receive a royalty for every CD sold.**

£32.99

COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE - NOT PD!

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May/June 1996.

SECTION

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VARE

EXTURE PORTFOLIO £29.99

...llection of textures has taken a staggering 5 years to complete. ...smagoria are a professional graphics company, based in Bristol. ... been providing textures and backgrounds for video, ray-tracing etc. This CD consists of 500+ 24Bit backgrounds and textures, it includes the very high quality 24Bit JPEG files for video, graphics and multimedia work, Targa's for PC raytracing and GIF format for video titling applications. The various sections include Abstract - Phantasmagoria, Abstract - Oil Paints, Abstract - Mixed, Animal Skins, Clouds, Fire, Food, Masonry, Rock, Metal (6 sub-sections), Water, Wood Bark, Wood Grain, Miscellaneous. No wasted space on this CD-Rom - a collection of extensive tutorials. This CD comes with a full colour multi-page reference booklet for every single texture. An ideal complement to a raytracing CD such as Light Rom 3 etc. **Please note that all these textures are exclusive to this CD-Rom and cannot be found on any other collection.**

GHT ROM VOLUME 3 £38.99

...Rom 3 is the most ambitious issue to date, consisting of 3 CD Rom's! Rom 1 is filled with thousands of Lightwave objects and scene files, building upon previous issues. Rom 2 contains huge collections of 3D objetcs in different file formats including Imagine (175MB's), 3D Studio (100MB's), Sculpt (30MB's) and Real 3D (7MB's). It also includes 700 textures in the JPEG format and a Video Toaster directory with wipes and CG fonts. Rom 2 also has a collection of 3D landscapes in the Lightwave, Imagine and 3D Studio file formats and a collection of useful Amiga and PC PD programs. Rom 3 is a "DEM ROM', a bonus CD-ROM containing over 1000 digital elevation maps for use with VistaPro, Scenary Animator and World Construction Set (available from Blittersoft) on any platform. All Lightwave objects, textures and DEMs on this collection are represented with thumbnail renderings. Michael Meshew, the author of Light Rom 1, 2 and 3, has produced a CD that offers the World artistic talent for a reasonable price.

SALE Texture Portfolio & Light Rom 3 for £49.99

NEW! SPACEBALLS present........

SCENE STORM

Scene Storm is a glorious feast of tempting eye candy produded by the legendary SPACEBALLS. Amazing graphic and audio delights to show your friends what the Amiga can really do! This CD is packed with every major scene production from 1995, including all the releases from The Party 5 held in Xmas 95. Exclusive Digital Candy material is also included, ranging from music competition entries to acomplete Development suite. Scene Storm features an easy to use Magic Workbench interface that is simple to set up and a joyto use. Much of the contents of Scene Storm are presented as ready-to-run files through custom designed icons. No more trawling through archives and filling your hard disk with files. Includes: Productions from over 20 Scene Parties held throughout the world in 1995. All the best demos and intros from the last year, slideshows, music disks, the most popular disk mags and charts. Exclusive modules taken from the coolest demos as well as entries from Digital Candy BBS Music Competitions. A complete development suite that will allow you to learn how to code your own demos. Development utils are included along with exclusive and easy to follow source code. All purchasers of Scene Storm that own a modem can register to qualify for 3 months free downloading of the latest scene files from Digital Candy Bulletin Board. This would normally cost £15. This BBS is classed as *the* 'scence' board in the UK! Place your pre-order now as this will be the hottest selling CD throughout Europe!

ECS/AGA MIXED **AVAILABLE END OF FEBRUARY** £19.99

NFA AGA EXPERIENCE

NFA have been serving the Amiga 'scene' recently with an amazing amount of effort. Well known in the UK for their Bodyshop series, excellent AGA-only Word disk magazine and programs such as 'Balls', 'Boomin Eck' and 'enLock' present their first CD for the Amiga. Unlike other scene releases, this contains AGA PD from the last 3 years of which 90% will run straight from the CD! Contains the best WB3+ utilities and creative software (100MB), the greatest AGA games (100MB), high quality AGA slideshows (150MB), the most outstanding AGA demos (200MB), entertaining and informative disk magazines and the best of the rest including the licenced Amiga Reports and all the Amiga 'Doom' clones. NFA have also compiled loads of exclusive wares for the CD: slideshows, Klondike cards and more. All this and contained in superb exclusive raytraced iconified drawers set within a Magic Workbench environment makes the CD an absolute pleasure to use! This has got to be the most comprehensive CD-Rom for any AGA user. Want to show off the power of your new AGA machine you received at Xmas? Get this if you do!

SALE £15.99

ENCOUNTERS

A first for the Amiga. The UFO phenomenon has hit the computer with this excellent release. Forget the X-Files, UFO's are for real - here is the evidence! The most comprehensive UFO compilation ever. UFO and 'the unknown' fans will not be dissapointed with this release. Based on AmigaGuide it allows the interaction of text files and images on every possible UFO story. Received over 90% in a recent Amiga Computing review. The only Amiga CD source for UFO and the unknown related subjects. Buy your copy before stocks run out!

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AMINET SET 2 OUT NOW

OCTAMED 6 CD-ROM

Octamed is the most easy-to-use, powerful and effective music sequencer on the Amiga. Designed for the beginner right through to a music expert, Octamed will allow you to play upto eight channels of sound on any Amiga. By using a fast processor (030) you can even use high-quality samples across all eight channels - effectively doubling the normal sound output (normally four channels). Octamed also has a built in sound sampler/editor, custom sound generator and MIDI support. This CD also contains over 600MB's of modules, the entire Walkabout sound sample collection and much more. Documentation comes in a on-line format and a laser printed, full-featured accompanying manual by Ed Wiles.

new release! **INCLUDES MANUAL!** £29.99

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Do you have one of the 'old' CD32's lying around in your house? Well, why not connect it to your Amiga and use it as an external CD drive. All you need to make the connected - the CD, disk (for the computer) and the cable. An A1200 is recommended.

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Contains megabytes of B/W IFF bitmaps, colour IFF, proclips, EPS, Pagesetter, Pgs, IMG, Corel Draw and coloured brushes for Deluxe Paint. Bargain! This CD-Rom is suitable for Amiga, PC and MAC computers.

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This is an update to the first AMOS CD - the official library disks upto 638, general Amos PD over 200 disks. Also includes, ready to run, 1600 source files, 100 sprite banks, 260 Ctext banks, 800 samples, music banks, Amos and Amos Pro extensions.

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SOUND WORKSHOP

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17BIT CD 5

Following on from successful Phase 4 CD-Rom this CD contains hundreds of megabytes of data from 17Bit Software. The 5th disc in this series contains only the very best software including demos, games, utilities, graphics, artwork, disk magazines, music modules and much more.

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WORLD INFO 95

Thinking about going abroad this year? Unsure about where to go? This is a virtual guide around the world. Explore different countries, learn different facts and information. You need a WWW browser and a machine capable of running in 256 colours for this CD.

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Multi-platform CD with emulators for Amiga, Atari ST, Mac and PC. Loads of FAQs (Speccy related), games lists, wallpaper (.BMP) pictures for Windows and (.IFF) for Amiga. Over 100 different Speccy computer screens and loads of tape covers. Stuffed with over 150MB's of Spectrum games for a myriad of computers. sof .Z80 files.

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...A GRAPHICS

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...LE £29.99

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We do not condone or supply hard core material

new!! £18.99

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A superb 3D CD that contains many objects for Imagine, Lightwave and Real 3D for the Amiga and PC computers. One exclusive aspect for this CD is the 24Bit Club's objects/images for Lightwave. You'll only find them on here! Also attribute files, tutorials, utilities.

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CD BOOT v2

This allows you to use any CD32 game on your A1200 or A4000. You can create a config file for every game. Comes with a complete English based manual and can run around 98% of CD32 games.

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This CD contains over 1.2 Gigs of sound and music data. It will form part of any professional musicians library or amateurs collection. 4,600 modules, 14,000 samples, 568 Sonix scores, 4500 instruments, 302 octamed modules and more!

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☎ 01325 352260
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Epson Stylus IIs

■ Price: £238 ■ Developer: Epson ■ Supplier: Epson ✆ 01734 303681

Regular readers of CU Amiga Magazine will know that we're long time fans of Epson's Stylus range. When we first reviewed the Stylus range we were impressed by its 720 dpi output which produced print quality the like of which hadn't been seen before in a low cost printer. As a result, the Stylus range quickly found a home in many Amiga users set-ups.

Cheaper version

To build on its successes, Epson have come up with the idea of taking the technology found in more expensive Stylus printers, cutting back some of the less important aspects: speed, buffer size etc and releasing lower priced models. The Epson Stylus II is one of these new reduced cost models.

This idea of releasing low cost versions of higher priced, higher spec printers is not new and in some cases has not always been a good idea as sometimes the low cost versions end up as the poor relations of the original and don't perform properly at all.

However this is not the case with the Epson Stylus, it definitely looks and feels like one of the Epson range. The colour reproduction is really superb for a printer in this price bracket. If you want to print out colour pictures with lots of colours you want this. Sadly, there are some annoying banding faults, which is odd because other Stylus printers I've seen have stood out for their lack of banding and paper waving.

Blots

Black and text reproduction, however, are disappointing. Pure black output comes out as off-black – hmmm, while text output is very poor. Also, there are numerous rogue ink drops around characters and it also seemed to take quite a while to pump out text only pages.

Apart from these problems the Stylus II is still very much a part of the Stylus range which is good. All in all for colour graphic output the Stylus II is a great low cost choice. Just avoid it for black or text only work. ■ **AL**

CD32
A500
A500+
A600
A1200
A1500
A2000
A3000
A4000
89%

• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Hewlett Packard 850c

■ Price: £450 ■ Developer: Hewlett Packard ■ Supplier: Hewlett Packard ✆ 01344 461 274

For the price of this inkjet from Hewlett Packard you could buy yourself an entire new system and quite a good one at that. So what's it got to offer for so much money? Well, for starters you get colour 600dpi output and an output speed of six pages a minute for black and white printing. Tempting, but then the Epson Stylus model above offers 720dpi. However, the HP model has 1Mb of RAM, plus a 32k buffer, which should mean your system can send files to the printer faster (so you get back to using the application quicker).

No swopping

A real bonus of this printer is that it can fit both colour and black cartridges simultaneously. Why is this a bonus? Well, Colour inkjets work by having cartridges which contain several different colour inks (usually three or four) which are then mixed to produce other colour combinations. However, this system, while good for colour, fails when it comes to printing true black – invariably you end up with a tinted black. The only solution for this is to stick in a dedicated black unit, but this means that for jobs that have both colour and black ink in them you end up having to stop and swop cartridges during the printing which is inconvenient and slow. The HP printer doesn't suffer from this problem because you it can handle both colour and black cartridges simultaneously. Having two cartridges (one black, one colour) makes the printer more suitable for complex documents containing both text and pictures.

Quality output

The output quality is very respectable. Not up to Stylus quality but still more than good enough for home use. Blacks are very respectable: dark, solid, and refreshingly free of banding. Even on large areas of continuous ink, where traditionally the volume of ink on the paper would cause it to ripple, HP's ink composition kept it relatively free of 'paper waves'.

On colour prints however I experienced some banding, although only over areas of heavy ink deposits. In other respects the colour output quality was very, very good. Although still obviously from an inkjet the output was some of the best I've seen. There was a little interference – where ink from surround pixels overflows and discolours the currently printed area – but nothing significant.

Tried and Tested Methods

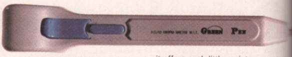
To test these printers we used *PageStream*. Firstly because it's a DTP program, and hence ideal for creating pages composed of both text and graphics – structured and bitmap. Secondly, because it comes with lots of printer drivers. In the case of the HP model we used the PCL printer drivers.

Overall, the 850c is a very respectable printer and ideal for home or business use. Certainly for colour use it's definitely worth a look, although it's rather expensive. For black and white graphics or text only work however I'd recommend you take a look at some of the low cost laser printers that are now turning up. ■ **AL**

CD32
A500
A500+
A600
A1200
A1500
A2000
A3000
A4000
80%

'Green' Pen Mouse

■ Price: £19.95 ■ Developer: Golden Image ■ Supplier: Golden Image ✆ 0181900 9291



Some manufacturers are taking this 'green' lark a too far. Billed in capital bold letters as a GREEN product, the only thing green about this unit is that the box is apparently recyclable. However, having never tried a pen mouse before I was looking forward to trying it out.

When I got it out the box though, I was sorely disappointed. It looked cheap and the plastic ball sticking out the bulbous business end rattled like a kid's toy. Also the pen's design didn't make it very easy to use.

Odd angle

The angle you have to hold it to comfortably use the buttons and keep the ball tracking effectively is completely wrong as far as I'm concerned. But because everyone holds a pen slightly differently I asked five people to try it out and no-one could get comfortable. To use it I had to hold it unnaturally and this made my hand tired very quickly.

Ten thumbs

Otherwise, how did it perform? Terribly. For a start the resolution is only half what it should be. As far as I'm concerned, the idea of a pen mouse is to allow you to draw (or write) things on screen in a similar way to doing it directly on to paper. It follows that this concept could only work if the pen mouse had a higher resolution than a normal mouse: you just don't want to have to move it move it all over the mat. Also, unlike pen to paper where you are looking down directly at your results, in this case you have to look at the monitor and almost blindly use the pen. And this unit just lacks the necessary feel for this. It was as though I had 10 thumbs every time I used it.

Alas, the buttons are also pretty useless. They are positioned on the top near the ball end and although accessible using your index finger while holding the pen pinched between the thumb and centre digit, the left mouse button equivalent (the long curved button at the bottom) must be sprung with an ant's leg, it offers such little resistance. It takes its time springing up again once pressed too. This makes double-clicking an imprecise affair. The 'right' button button is positioned further up the body and is awkward to use too, though more reliable.

Even users trying for the natural feel in an art package would be far better served with a decent 560 dpi mouse for the same sort of money. Steer well clear of this joke. ■

MB

CD32
A500
A500+
A600
A1200
A1500
A2000
A3000
A4000

21%

• •

ScreenBeat Sub-Woofer

■ Price: £149.99 ■ Developer: Logic 3 ■ Supplier: Logic 3 ✆ 0181 900 0024

Do you pine for more audio amplification? Do you wish that when its time to blow the *Gloom* ghosts away or compose your own brain-spinning groove you could really crank up the audio? If you do then Logic 3 have the sonic steroid you need. Their new speaker is a 100 watt subwoofer and satellite speaker combo designed to rumble with the best of them.

The main boom box is housed in tower unit that could, with a little imagination fit, into the set of an original StarTrek scene, while the two left and right units look like traditional computer speakers. All three are cased in an Amiga-ish off-white colour and sit comfortably along side all models.

Loud enough?

In pure watts per pound terms Logic 3 should do well, on paper anyway. However, when wired up and pumping out sonics we were slightly disappointed. Sure it does a good job, with a hefty bass able to throb, but it when the volume was cranked up it just didn't seem loud enough – for this kind of money we expected it to be a lot louder. At this point I should point out that it's loudest is still too loud for prolonged use in a normal environment, but on those rare occasions when you want really loud sound the Logic 3 won't hack it – which is annoying as this is one of the reasons you'd buy such a unit.

Assuming you're not judging this on wattage terms alone however you won't be disappointed. Explosions in *Gloom* and *Zeewolf* rumble the floor, while punches and kicks from Kung Lao and his buddies in *Mortal Kombat* really hurt. Higher frequency sounds, produced by the satellite speakers rather than the sub-woofer sound clean and clear, although some of the very high frequencies get a bit lost in the overall mix. Normal music and sampled sounds were also produced ably, although it doesn't handle really heavy bass tracks as well as might be expected from a system that after all was designed with Bass reproduction in mind..

Logic 3
SUPER WOOFER
Logic 3
Logic 3

Money's worth

For top sound this sub-woofer produces the goods. Although a lot of dosh, some one hundred and fifty gold coins, you'll find it hard to match the bass and volume it pumps out for less. It should also be remembered that if you already have a CD32, or Amiga with CD drive, adding this unit will give you a respectable CD amplifier for a lot less than a new Hi Fi. ■

AL

CD32
A500
A500+
A600
A1200
A1500
A2000
A3000
A4000

83%

Datastore 2

■ **Price: £49.99** ■ **Developer: Digita** ■ **Supplier: Digita ✆ 01395 270 273**

If you want to keep your life in order and sort out that gigantic video or wine collection, then you need a database. Digita updates their popular info-mine ...

A little while back two flatfile databases appeared in rapid succession: *Final Data* by Softwood and *Datastore* by Digita. Both were reasonable, and ideal as Amiga-versions of the sort of common paper card file databases found in millions of offices and homes around the world. Now Digita return with a new rendition of their program – *Datastore 2*.

Improvements

At first glance there wouldn't appear to be any major new innovations in *Datastore*. Admittedly it can now open on Public Screens – you're no longer limited to working in resolutions and colour palettes that Digita chose – so it looks different but the architecture of the screen layout remains the same.

However once you get into the user interface there are some subtle but important improvements. Perhaps the most important of these is that the Find dialog can now be left open all the time, even while you do other things with the program. This may not sound special but given that databases are aimed at maintaining lists of data and interrogating them to order the ability to constantly find particular records and edit them without having to open and close a requester is very, very useful.

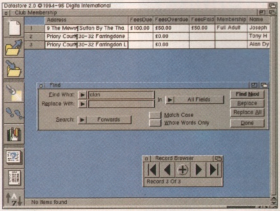
Another useful improvement is the List View, which shows records vertically with individual fields being displayed across the page – like a spreadsheet. When viewing records in this manner it's possible to drag records to and from the display to customise it to your tastes. This is definitely a shot across the bows of *Final Data*, which looks like a spreadsheet that's been converted into a database. It'll be interesting to see what SoftWood do in response.

Faster?

Digita are also claiming that this new version has faster data loading and saving times, and that they've increased the overall reliability of the program. Although reliability is always a tough factor to judge they've certainly boosted disk accessing times – on my stock A1200 a test database I built took almost a second less to save to floppy than previously!

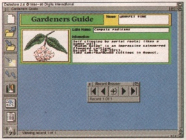
These new tricks join *Datastore*'s armoury of existing facilities (extreme ease of use, the ability to include pictures with your data, and freeform database design) to make it a very flexible and able database. In fact I'd now go so far as to say that it's probably the leading non-relational database on the Amiga.■

Andy Leaning



	Address	FeesDue	FeesOverdue	FeesPaid	Membership	Name
1	9 The Mews¶Sutton By The Tha	£100.00	£50.00	£50.00	Full Adult	Joseph
2	Priory Court¶30-32 Farringdone		£0.00			Tony H
3	Priory Court¶30-32 Farringdon L		£0.00			Alan Dy

▲ The new Datastore 2, complete with List views and the ability to keep the search requester open while you do other things in the program – both very, very, useful.



▲ It looks just like the old version, but Datastore 2 has many new features just waiting to be used.

Flat what?

Datastore and its rival Final Data are what's known as flatfile databases, which means that they work like the old card files found in homes and offices. Let me explain. Imagine having a desktop file, and for each person you know it contains a piece of card and all the data relating to each person is written on this card. Very simple, easy and effective but also limiting. If for example you had a list of friends you play darts with on one set of cards and another set of cards listing the members of a football team that you're part of, you'd have to create a new set of cards simply to cross reference the names and addresses of people who appear in both.

The alternative is a relational database, which allows you to have multiple databases and use the information in one with another – so you could simply call up the address records from the darts database while you're using the football file to find out if there are any crossovers. Even better, if you update one, the other is automatically kept up to date too! If you're looking for a way of entering, maintaining and indexing lists of data, a flatfile database (Datastore 2) is what you want.

DATASTORE 2

A500
A500+
A600
A1200
A1500
A2000
A3000
A4000

system requirements:
Will work with all Workbench 3 Amigas

ease of use......................92%
Very simple to master and use. One of the best.

performance.....................91%
Definitely faster, though previous versions were speedy enough.

value for money..............91%
It's competitive on Amiga and cheaper than databases on alternative formats.

OVERALL
If you want value and power, look no further
92%

CD-ROM Round Up

Tony Horgan rounds up ... er two CDs this month ... but there's lots on them, honest.

Assassins Ultimate Games Vol 2

The Assassins are well known for their regular floppy disk compilations of PD games. They don't write the games themselves, they just handle the production of the compilations. This CD is their second CD-ROM release, which includes all of their previous floppy releases in DMS archive form, along with hundreds of 'new' PD games ready to run from the disc.

PD game compilation CDs are always a bit hit and miss. To their credit The Assassins seem to have put quite a lot of effort into ensuring that the games on this CD work on most Amigas, but during our tests the failure rate was annoyingly high. In the main the the CD was tested on a CD32 and an A1200 with a 50MHz 030 accelerator and an extra 4Mb of RAM. One problem that often occurs with similar CDs concerns the differing controls of each game; some require a keyboard, others expect joystick or mouse input or any combination of the three. After you select your game from the menu you're told which controls the game requires. There's also a selection of utilities, instructions and help files on the disc, along with some networking software.

Unfortunately the quality of most of the games is awful. Shaky AMOS creations and unexciting re-vamps of ancient computer games account for most of them. There are a few expertly-crafted updates of old coin-op favourites, such as Deluxe Galaga, and some neat Workbench hacks like Lander (complete with "The Eagle has landed" NASA samples. If you feel it's worth buying the CD for a few gems then go ahead, but don't expect a disc full of decent games.

Available from: Active Software, PO Box 151, Darlington, Durham DL3 8YT. Tel: 01325 352260. Price: £18.99 plus £75p (Europe) £1 (ROW) P+P.

50 %

Phase 3

Anyone looking for a decent CD-ROM of images and fonts for DTP and DTV will find Phase 3 an attractive option. The data on the disc is made up of three main groups: fonts, clip art and images.

There are four types of fonts included: Compugraphic, PageStream, Type 1 and IFF 'clip fonts'. There are stacks of them and they all come with preview screens that can be viewed with a double mouse click. The disc is worth the price for the fonts alone.

Next there's the clip art, which comes in colour IFF and mono IFF formats. The mono clips are different to the colour clips, covering the following areas: events; military; miscellaneous; sport; transport; work and world. The colour clips cover five main areas: flowers; insects; mammals; trees and Christmas. Each of the directories comes complete with its contents in the form a thumbnail preview screen. This means that you can scan the whole directory by viewing just one or two preview screens, then grab the file you want, rather than viewing each one in full.

Finally there's the images section. Unlike the clip art images, these are full screen digitised photos, generally of a high quality. The subjects covered are as follows: backdrops; bikes; boats; castles; cats; classic cars; Dungeons and Dragons; Dr Who; Deep Space Nine; fractals; girls; Greece; hunks; Heavy Metal (the comic); Italian cars; movies; robots; Star Wars; water life; White (fantasy) and Patrick Woodroffe (fantasy). Each image is supplied as a 16, 256 and 4096 (HAM) colour IFF file. The same preview indexes are used here as with the clip art.

This is one of the best DTP/DTV CD-ROMs on the market. Recommended to anyone in need of some quality ready-made graphics and fonts.

Available from: EMC Computergraphic, 8 Edith Road, Clacton On Sea, Essex CO15 1JU. Tel: 01255 431 389. Price: £24.99 plus £1 P+P.

85 %

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EPIC MARKETING

AMIGA SOFTWARE

Basically this is a 3 disk compilation of tools which should really have been on Workbench. eg: Virus Killer, Fast text editor and displayer. Menu system, File manager. A few Workbench games and more.
Only £7.00

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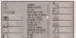

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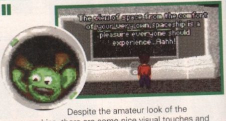
PD Scene

Want some cheap thrills? Here's Tony Horgan with the latest batch of low-budget entertainment from the public domain.

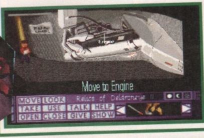
Relics Of Deldroneye II

adventure game



The view of space from the comfort of your very own spaceship is a pleasure everyone should experience...Aahh!

Adventure fans have had a lean time of it recently, with only the belated *Flight of the Amazon Queen* quenching the thirst for brain cell action. *Relics of Deldroneye II* isn't quite in the same league but it still packs a fair old puzzle. By the looks of it, it was written with the Graphic Adventure Creator utility which we reviewed in the February 1996 issue. Using the familiar point and click interface that's now become standard for adventure games, *Relics II* plops you into an open ended sci-fi story that kicks off with the central character stranded on an abandoned spaceship.



Despite the amateur look of the graphics, there are some nice visual touches and enough details have been included to keep up the interest level.

If *Relics* looks a bit pricey, bear in mind that it's not actually PD and it comes on five disks. You'll need an A1200 or A4000 to run it.

Even if there were plenty of commercial alternatives, *Relics II* would still be worth a shot, but especially in the current climate it comes highly recommended.

Available from: F1 Licenceware, 31 Wellington Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 9DU. Tel: 01392 493 580. Email: steve@dcandy.demon.co.uk. Price: £7.99.

89 %

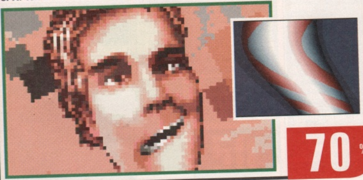
Flavour

AGA demo

Flavour is one of the few good demos that's appeared recently but don't expect it to blow your mind, as you'll have seen most of the effects before. It begins with a light-sourced texture-mapped vector, followed by a slightly more impressive plasma-covered doughnut. Next there's a wobbly stick of rock, a bout of yawn-inducing 3D dot patterns, the obligatory bitmap zooms and wibbles and some blur effects. An average techno soundtrack provides the aural interest.

While this is quite entertaining in a predictable demo kind of fashion, the fact that it's the best offering this month is rather sad. It's starting to look as though the coders have had enough of squeezing new tricks out of the Amiga hardware. With any luck this is just a dry spell and we'll be flooded with wonderful new forms of psychedelia next month. Here's hoping.

Available from: OnLine PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335. BBS: 01704 834 583. Price: 75p plus 75p P+P.



70 %

Deformed

AGA demo

Demo-heads in need of another fix may like to take a look at Deformed, which features all the usual routines, including texture mapped cuboids, fiery blur effects and light-sourced vectors. Still nothing new though.

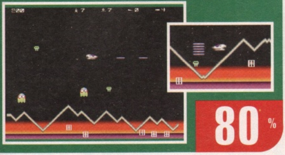
Available from: OnLine PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335. BBS: 01704 834 583. Price: 75p plus 75p P+P.

60 %

Phantom
game

Have you got room for just one more *Defender* clone in your collection? *Phantom* lacks the scanner of the original but includes most of the other elements that made the Williams coin-op such a success. Most importantly it's fast and smooth with good explosions and sound effects – essential requirements for any decent shoot 'em up of course. Recommended to all zap-fans.

Available from: OnLine PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335. BBS: 01704 834 583. Price: 75p plus 75p P+P.



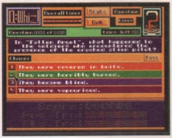
80 %

Q: Whiz!
quiz game

Once it's up and running, *Q: Whiz!* is a fairly playable pub-quiz game. It's unfortunate that setting it up isn't a bit simpler. You can choose from a number of question banks, each of which has its own subject. Sci-fi fans will be pleased to hear that there are banks devoted to The X-Files, Star Trek and Red Dwarf, along with the usual collection of general knowledge questions.

It's let down somewhat by the long-winded intermissions between questions, during which counters are clocked up, timers are refilled, and text is printed and deleted in teletype style, one character at a time. A commercial two-disk version is available from the same address.

Available from: Paul Nordovics, 4 Katharine Street, Millom, Cumbria LA18 4AQ. Tel: 01229 773 823. Price: (PD version) £1.49 including P+P, (full version) £6.74 including P+P.



In "Fallen Angel", what happened to the soldiers who encountered the presence of the crashed alien pilot?

1 They were covered in boils.
2 They were horribly burned.
3 They became blind.
4 They were vapourised.

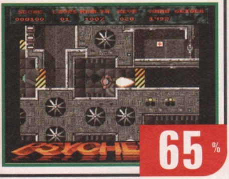
67 %

Psycheual
game

Underworld's 'Dark Train' is sampled and looped to form the backing for the intro screen of this one, even though it never gets further than the first few bars. The game itself is a blatant rip-off of Team 17's *Alien Breed* (2D), taking the top-down maze shoot 'em up format and, well, just reproducing it really.

It's all done competently enough, with smooth scrolling and all of that kind of stuff. If you liked the original *Alien Breed* and fancy playing a slightly different version, check it out. Underworld fans would do better to stick with their official musical output. You don't need an AGA machine but you do need 1Mb of Chip RAM to run it.

Available from: OnLine PD, 1 The Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335. BBS: 01704 834 583. Price: 75p plus 75p P+P.



65 %

Speed 8
intros compilation

The best thing about intros is that they're always very small, so you can fit loads of them on your hard drive, or tack them onto your favourite disks without wasting space. Most of them return to your Amiga's operating system when you click the left mouse button. This compilation has the usual mixed bag, some of which are fun while others are frankly crap. Most of the effects are of the 'chunky colourful spinning things' variety – good news for lovers of all things wibbly wobbly.

Any VJs looking for quick snatches of weird visuals will find some gems here. As most of them can be run and re-run within seconds, tagging together multiple edits of the same short sequence would be much easier than attempting the same thing with a full-blown demo that ran for ten minutes.

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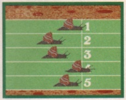
79 %

Snail Racing
game



What could be more exciting than a snail race? The smell of the slime, the lure of the lettuce ... I can feel the adrenaline rush already! No, that was lie actually. Snail racing is just as tedious as it sounds. You can choose to race your own snail, training it by selecting the best diet possible or bet on a race of other snails. Either way it's not the sort of thing you're likely to get the urge to do a second time.

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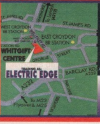

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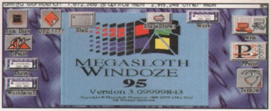
VISA

PD Utilities

Time is of the essence, this month, as there's two nifty timer utilities up for grabs. There's also some pretties for your workbench and amongst other things some very important news about pirates. Mat Bettinson is your guide.

Graphic Workbench
workbench enhancer



Oh, another Workbench enhancer pack. Well this one is different in that before going ahead with ruining your icons, it backs them up so you can restore them later. Good show.

When you run the installer, it plays a module, displays a couple of pictures (which fails if you don't have AGA) of the development crew which, according to the start-up blurb, 'laugh in the face of fear'. Hmmm.

The rest of the action oddly returns to the Commodore Installer which gets confused if you click on both the sideshow and install icon buttons. Weird.

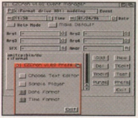
I choose the Windows '95 backdrop pattern and expected it to replace all my Workbench icons with new theme based icons. Instead it only replaced my main drive icons. The Windoze 95 backdrop was amusing and a copper backdrop daemon was added to user-startup for a nice blue wash effect on the borders and shells etc.

Whether it's worth picking up this pack depends on whether you've already got any Workbench enhancements. If yes then don't bother, if not, it has an interesting range of backdrops and themed drive icons and could spruce up the horrible standard Workbench look in conjunction with the NewIcons, MagicWork- bench or Icongraphics icon packs.

Available from: SeaSoft Computing, Unit 3, Minister Court, Courtwick Lane, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 7RN. Tel: 01903 850378. Price: £1.50 plus 50p P+P.

74 %

EZCron 1.62
timer utility

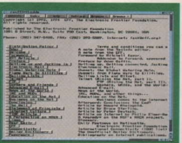


'Cron' derived from 'Chronos' meaning time in Greek, is also the name given to a very important and useful utility which is designed to launch certain events at certain times. Such a program could be used as anything from an alarm clock to a complex system overseer which activates automatic events during the night. This latter is how I run CU Amiga's Internet mail system, so I tested EZCron on it. I found it to have a nice installer and a GUI program for editing the events file. However, the GUI is a bit tricky as it is implemented by the Arexx bolt-on Varexx and it is limited in the fonts it can handle. It also has a long winded method of selecting times and dates. Useful modes are available but you have to enter the values into string boxes in the GUI in a certain format. I didn't like the GUI much but it does the job, is easy to install and has some good on-line help.

Available from: SeaSoft Computing, Unit 3, Minister Court, Courtwick Lane, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 7RN. Tel: 01903 850378. Price: £1.50 plus 50 P+P. Aminet path: util/time/EZCron.lha

83 %

Internet Guide
electronic guide



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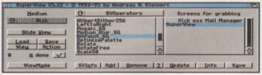
Published by The Electronic Frontier Foundation

Anyone trying to get to grips with the Internet will be completely swamped by the complexity of many aspects. A handy resource would be a good book or in the case of this offering, an electronic guide to the Internet. This particular effort is put together by the American techo-junky group Electronic Frontier Foundation and has no Amiga specific material. That means it's not going to help you set up Amiga Internet software but it is an excellent reference to the whole host of services available on the Internet which aren't machine specific anyway. In one large Amiga Guide format, it's interspersed with various press articles and some nasty examples of American English but it does the job nicely just the same. A reasonable reference for just a pound can't be sniffed at. The same guide was also formerly known as the Big Dummy's Guide to the Internet. It's a 700K guide so it's going to require quite a bit of memory to continually access and some of the information is a little too vague such as the section on mailing lists but otherwise it's recommended. This guide in conjunction with the wealth of Amiga related chatter on the comp.sys.amiga newsgroups should serve well.

Available from: OnLine PD, 1 the Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby, Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335. Price: 75p plus 75p P+P.

82 %

SuperView 5.32
picture database


SuperView V5.32 - © 1993-95 by Andreas R. Kleinert
Medium
Disk
Slide View
Load
Save
View
Action
0 % done
ViewMode
SVOperators
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OilPaint_SQ
OptimizePalette
Rotate
RotateFree
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Screens for grabbing
Kick ess Mail Manager
SuperView
SVInfo
Add
Remove
2
Update
Info
Save

This interesting package, a new kind of datatype system for pictures, has been around for a while and is constantly being updated. Implemented by a superview library and drivers for various display types, it has considerable versatility. It also has support for 'operators' which can perform a variety of functions on pictures before they are viewed/saved.

Sharpening and oil painting type effects to dithering schemes for converting 24-bit pictures down to other formats are all on offer. This is the kind of use where SuperView excels. It will load virtually any type of picture, display nearly every type of display I have ever heard of, including (glory) my own CyberGraphics graphics board. What's more, it's a better viewer than many dedicated viewers!

The unregistered version will load and view but will not save in any other format than IFF whereas the registered version (£15) will save in all the same formats it is capable of loading. It's useful still but if you need to convert pictures quickly, want excellent graphics board support and a simple compact interface then the £15 odd (30 German DM) is worthwhile.

**Available from: SeaSoft Computing, Unit 3,
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01903 850378. Price: £1.50 plus
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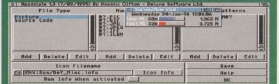
Aminet path: gfx/show/SView532.lha**

89 %

Flummy Utils #4
utility compilation


Associate 1.3 (7/09/1995) By Dominic Clifton - Deluxe Software Ltd.
File Type
Picture
Source Code
Nar
#?.PIC
#?.GIF
#?.JPG
#?.JPEG
#?.IFF
#?.ILBM
SurveyMem V3.0
Wednesday 24-Jan-96 13:06:06
Chip M: 68% 1.363 M
Fast M: 32% 3.725 M
atterns
M#?
Add
Delete
Edit
Add
Delete
Edit
Add
Delete
Edit
Icon Filename
ENV:Sys/Def_Misc.info
Icon Info
Run Info When activated
Save
Help
OK

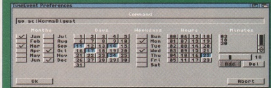
Flummy is seven archives taken off the Aminet, extracted onto a floppy disk, compressed with Power Packer and all the libraries required stuffed in a libs directory on the auto booting disk. However, all the archives are fragmented and you'll have to go hunting for the bits and pieces to run each util. None of them are particularly good either!

AddPower **is probably the most promising as it assigns and paths preferences without loads of lines in the user-startup. It's a reasonable effort but well and truly eclipsed by MCP.** ***Autostart*** **re-invents WBStartup without saying WHY.** ***Survey Mem*** **implements a memory gauge. Wow.** ***Associate*** **is mildly useful for creating icons for programs with no icons and the rest of the programs gurued when I tried to run them. This is a very poor disk but could be worth it for** ***Associate*****, maybe.**

**Available from: OnLine PD, 1 the
Cloisters, Halsall Lane, Formby,
Liverpool L37 3PX. Tel: 01704 834 335.
Price: 75p plus 75p P+P.**

28 %

CyberCron 1.5
timer utility


TimeEvent Preferences
Command
Months
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Days
Weekdays
Sun
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thu
Fri
Sat
Hours
Minutes
18
Add
Del
Ok
Abort

go sc:WormsDigest

CyberCron is another Cron (Timer) utility and one that I've used for a long time. With no GUI support of its own, it runs from a simple configuration file. It also doesn't have an installer, just documentation detailing installation.

CyberCron 1.5 is a solid Cron system, all it needs is a GUI so that we don't need to get out a text editor every time that something needs to be altered. So I've asked 17 Bit Software PD, to put another utility on a disk for readers with no Internet access. This utility, ***Time Event*****, is a GUI editor for CyberCron and has a much better interface that the** ***EZCron*****. The events are simply listed as a CLI command line that is executed at particular times. Once the command line is entered, a proper GUI pops up that allows you to select the months, days and minutes. Unlike** ***EzCron*** **it's easy to set up really weird times like at two separate times past each hour only on Thursday and Saturday etc.**

This definitely the best Cron solution that I have seen around since I checked out many before arriving at this combination. Less knowledgeable users might still prefer to go for the all-in-one EzCron, though.

**Available from: 17 Bit Software, 1st Floor Offices,
2/8 Market Street, Wakefield, West
Yorkshire WF1 1DH. Tel: 01924-366982.
Disk Number: 4016. Price: £1.00 plus
50p P+P. Aminet path: util/time/
CyberCron15.lha & util/time/TimeE1_1.lha**

91 %

NFA Pirates?

While sifting through this month's pile of PD software, I found a program called *enLock*, a hard drive protection package from a group known as NFA. The package itself didn't work as the Installer was broken hopelessly. This and the fact that the AmigaGuide documentation had an incorrect default tool so that it too would not work, indicated that the product hadn't been checked at any stage. Worse still, when I finally got the installer working, the last page blatantly advertised NFA BBSes with pirate references.

Roberta Smith DTP, who supplied the disk has recalled disks that have turned out to be less than squeaky clean in the past. The EnLock disk itself must therefore have been an oversight. Roberta instantly recalled the disk when I informed them, and said that they'd be looking into it.

Are other PD houses following suit or are they turning a blind eye? The BBS advert is, as far as I can see, an advert for pirate BBSes with the term 'ASK-ELITE' being present instead of the latter part of the number for two BBSes. 'Elite' being a well known self-applied name that pirates refer to themselves as (with typical arrogance). Piracy is bad enough but pirate BBSes are actively involved in the distribution and sale of pirate software, something the Amiga can ill afford! The fact that some of these are listed as belonging to NFA makes me suspicious. There's no number in the archive and just a P.O. box as an address to send your registration fee to so it seems I can't take it up with them. The question remains that with such a blatant statement, how can it be that virtually every PD House sells NFA products, many of them hypocritically being shareware like *enLock*. If NFA would like to clear up the matter I'd like to hear from them. I think we should be told and you can be sure that CU Amiga Magazine is on the case.

Exclusive PD

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+44 (01705) 642409

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Telephone at any time and leave your name and address (Quote CU Amiga) and request our CD-ROM brochure completeley FREE of charge. You'll also recieve regular CD updates with special offers etc.

CD REGISTRATIONS

C64 SENSATIONS £17.99

REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS

This CD contains all the Software that we have collected during our great times on the C64. Dating from the present day. Surprising as it may seem to a lot of people there is C64 scene today. Although very different from a few years ago still a lot of people still heavily into the 64. And the rest of you, like a lot of great memories. That is one of the reasons why we compiled So anytime we want to reminisce the old days we can just pull out the in and Everything is brought back to you. the front cover youll find useful information on how to use the various Amiga tools to be used for copying & converting the back to your 1541 or into your Amiga. Also included is the FULL A64 Emulator Package.

NFA: AGA EXPERIENCE 17.99

The first CD dedicated to A1200/4000 owners, features the very best AGA-only software released in the past 3 years.

- EXCLUSIVE NFA.These quality titles were created by leading Amiga group NFA specifically for this CD. These titles include AGA Slideshows, Klondike cardsets and others. The CD features every AGA NFA release to date, including the brilliant 'Word' diskmag, 'Out of Space' Alien multimedia disk mags. The entire collection of the popular 'Bodyshop' series of slideshows, including an EXCLUSIVE 'Bodyshop' release!
- READY-TO-RUN. Most of the contents run straight from the CD.
- MAGIC WORKBENCH Colour scheme and icons. Almost every program has a suitable MagicWB icon. We have even created custom Ray-Traced icons for the CD, any Amiga owner is guaranteed to be impressed!.
- 80 NEW CARDSETS And a ready-to-run version of the brilliant Klondike card game, with 10 built-in cardsets.
- LOADS of MagicWB icons, backdrops etc. Add a professional appearance to your WB.
- HUNDREDS of programs never before seen on CD. Mostly downloaded from BBS's around the World, and straight from the Internet.
- ALL AGA Amiga Doom clones.
- BRILLIANT Amiga-created images.. These pictures are on no other CD.
- LATEST AGA Mega-demos.

NEW!!

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The F1 Licenceware CD-ROM contains every F1 title from 1 through to 100. The software on this CD is worth well over £500 if bought seperately.

Includes; **Blackboard V3.0**, image manipulation package, **Ultimate Quiz V2.0**, **Words Plus Pro**, originally valued at £15.00, **Fortress** - a God strategy game, **Relics of Deldroneye** - one of the best selling Licenceware titles and voted *best PD game of all time* by Amiga Format, **GR.A.C.** The best selling Licenceware adventure creator, **Introduction to WB, Beginners Guide to AMOS, Junior Artist** - one of many kids titles. uses and easy to use menu with *80% of programs running direct from CD*

COMMERCIAL SOFTWARE NOT PD!

AmiNet Volume 10 £12.99

Out now. As many of you will have seen, this series of CD-ROMs is a compilationof the latest software to grace the sites of the AmiNet, a global networkof Amiga computers very similar to the internet.All the software is in archived form (.lha, .DMS, .lzx etc.) and thus makes these CDs tremendous value for money and are our highest selling CD.You may have recently recieved a close representation of AmiNet 7 on thecover of CU Amiga. If you got this CD and were impressed as most users ofthe AmiNet series are - you'll want to keep up to date with the latestsoftware AmiNet 10 is likely to contain. All catagories are covered. The main concentration of this issue is unknown at the time of writing as well as containing all the latest uploads to the Aminet sites around the globe.

Aminet Volume 11 May 96 (Pre-order) £11.99

Aminet Volume 7 £11.99

Aminet Set 1 (Vol 1-4) £23.99

AmiNet Volume 8 £11.99

AmiNet Set 2 (Vol 5-8) £24.99

AmiNet Volume 9 £11.99

Subscription service £11.49 (All new releases posted to your door on day of release. Your Credit/Debit card charged on despatch).

HOT NEW RELEASE

SPECCY '96 £17.99

It is truly a multiplatform CDROM with Emulator's for various computer types such as The Amiga, Atari ST, Mac and PC. Contains some exclusive products which ONLY appear on this CD and have never been released before. You get loads of FAQs, Spectrum Techinal FAQs, Games lists, The modified spectrum ROM, Modified interface 1 ROM, other Modified Wallpaper pictures for windows (.BMP) and Amiga bench (.IFF), Various pictures in .JPG & .GIF formats of inlays, Spectrum computers, Game level maps, Famous people and over 100 computer screenshots. Have hours with the best loved computer from yester-years, be pre- to spend weeks looking through all the games, utilities, mation, maps, and pictures of this classic computer. The choice for anyone interested in the spectrum computer you want to convert your own games from tape then this will tell you how (req resisted version which is not supplied disc).

HOTTEST 6 13.49

More than 650Mb of Brand New Programs and over 750 PDSOFT floppy disks. The latest PD and shareware from March to December 1995. Now comes complete with an easy to use menu system. The Menu is an easy to use point and click operation with an interface to Unpack the CD.

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- 300 NEW LIBRARY DISKS Games, Slides, Pictures, Demos, Music, Magazines, Animation, Rave Productions.
- 100 NEW FRED FISH DISKS 1001 to 1100, * 80 NEW KLONDIKE CARDSETS, * IMAGES FROM SPACE
- 100 Bitmap Fonts in mono ideal for use with your workbench and dpaint programs.
- 100 Bitmap Fonts in colour (4,8 & 16 colours)ideal for desktop video work and colour DTP.
- 100 Adobe type 1 Fonts ideal for use with Pagestream users.
- 100 Compugraphic Fonts for use with Workbench 2.0 and 3.0 machines. Complete scalable fonts in mono.
- ELECTRONIC TEXTS Alice in Wonderland, Moby Dick, Tarzan, Huckleberry Finn, The Wizard of Oz, The Arabian Nights, The Jungle Book, The Heart of Darkness. The Book of Mormon, The King James Bible, Works from Robert Louis Stevenson, George Elliot, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Mary Wollstonecraft and many more!.
- POV RAY Version 2.2 with a selection of helpfull text, example texts and pictures.
- BUSINESS SELECTION Contains all the best software to help any small business or anybody that wants to print a letter, an invoice, a business card, a Letter head.

THE CHEAP SEATS

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17Bit Phase 4 £9.99
BCI Net 1 £4.99
Colour Library £9.99
Def. Of The Crown 2 £9.99
Essential Utils 1 £9.99
Gamers Delight £9.99
Lock & Load £9.99
Power Games £9.99
Super Autos £4.99
Turbo Calc V2.1 £9.99
World Of Sound £9.99

NEW!

This CD contains 1,070 games for the Amiga from differing catagories; Action, Jump & Run, Card Games, Puzzles, Strategy Games, awhole range of computer entertainment awaits!Gamers Delight 2 will hold you captivated for hours and guarantees longlasting pleasure. 70 games are commercial versions, no public domain andno demos!Requires any Amiga with 1MB of free memory and a joystick

GAMERS DELIGHT 2 £26.99

Comprises hundreds of games for the Amiga & CD32. The games are accessed by a user friendly menu system with all the gameson the menu compatible with the CD32. Workbench, ParNET and SerNET are also provided to allow access to the full contents on this truly amazing CD. The relevant Assassins Games disks and utility disks are provided in archived form, these are easily dearchived via the Amiga guide file provided. The Guide also providesaccess to the instructions for each game.

ASSASSINS GAMES VOLUME 2 £17.99

Containing over 300Mb of Sci-fi images, music, animations, 3D objects, SFX, Documents, Themetunes, Information and games. Catagories include: Babylon 5, Star Trek (Original, TNG, DS9, Voyager & the films), Batman, Dr Who, Thunderbirds, Robocop, Bladerunner, Aliens, 2001, Battlestar Galactica, Tron, Total Recall etc. All ready to run direct from the CD. There are other intresting software catories like Images, Games, Clipart, SCI-FI Fonts, Information, WallPaper, Stories, music, Samples, 3D Objects, Game Graphics, Tools, and Animations in FLI, FLC, ANIM, Movies, AVI, Mov and MPEG.

SCI -FI SENSATION [DOUBLE CD] £16.99

SEXY SENSATIONS 17.99

Contains a special menu system from which you can display all the files. As you scan through all the files on the CD, your cursor high-lights the selected and its displayed on screen. Images are stored in format and viewers provided, but not nescessry as is an excellent menu system. Works with all machines workbench 1.2 - 4.x

ADULT SENSATION 2 £17.99

OVER GIRL POKER £26.99

ADULT SENSATION £16.99

BARGAIN!

MEETING PEARLS 3 £9.99

Another very popular CD, purely on value for money.Very similar in principle as the AmiNet CDs but with different software.All programs are archived using the popular methods, and include animation,utilities, music and midi files, Frequently Asked Questions on various subjects, a huge movie database, archived for Psion computers, pictures, Linux for the Amiga and lots more. These examples are from Volume 2.

MEETING PEARLS 2 £8.99

The follow up to the ever popular Networking CD. Full of networking andcomms software to allow your Amiga to chat to local or globally linkedamigas. Including a SerNET program which is much easier to use than previousversions. And is likely to contain various catagories of software such as:24Bit images, PhotoCD conversion, Comms, Fonts, clipart and much, much more.

NETWORK 2 £13.49

SERNET CABLE & SOFTWARE £17.99

The first cdrom to come with a free printed book which describes all the public domain and shareware titles. Contains PDSOFT'S library (disks V1501-V1750), and from 4001-4300. Covers a variety of Public Domain subjects; Utilities, Games, Mega Demos - AGA, Euro Demos, Demos, Product demos, Disk Magazines, Music Disks, Slide shows, Clipart, Fonts, Rave Dance Tracks, Sampled Sounds, Images in JPG, GIF, AGA 256, Imagine Objects, Textures, Animations, Sound Samples, Music Modules, Colour Clip art, Educational disks, Adobe type 1 fonts, DPaint fonts, Scalable fonts, Business programs, Word processors, Graphic utilities, Workbench tools, Magic Workbench icons, Music production, Hard drive utils, Comms, Virus Killers, Video production, Emulator's, Fractals, Printer utilities, New Printer drivers, & much more.

HOTTEST 5 £15.99

Contains a new recoded menu system that proports to be the easiest on any CD! Has been updated since the first release and contains over 1000 disks, 1.2 GIG of PD software. Just browse through the menu and read the description of a disk and click a button to unarchive it. it's as simple as that. One of our most popular CDs to date. 100 NEW Klondike cardsets, Imagine objects and all variety of PD from games & Demos through to utilities and fonts. 125 NEW disks.

ZOOM UPDATE £17.99 NEW!

The Eric Schwartz Productions CD archive, created by Eric Schwartz himself, contains all of his previously released animations and artwork. Also included on this CD are 3 new large animations exclusive to the CD, several previously unreleased animations, pictures, Imagine & Lightwave objects used in creating his work and a special set of icons. Also contains the work of several other artists and cartoonists. Eric is the God of Amiga animations!

E.S. PRODUCTIONS CD ARCHIVE £22.49 NEW!

LATEST DEMOS

NEBRA (AGA)
demo I've seen for a while. Superb demo strikingly long for a single disker. 10/10 - this in your collection!
COOPEX: ARTCORE (AGA)
images are hand drawn and are presented gallery. Great music too. 11/10 - GET IT.
: PICTURE BOOK (4, AGA)
DEMO IS BRILLIANT. Superb chart quality which even has lyrics. The BEST demo seen. 100/10 - GET THIS DEMO NOW ! !
: THE WORD #7 (2 DISKS, AGA)
music (a choice of 2, good looking graphics of backdrops) and tonnes of articles from Jokes rip offs, to game reviews, an adult section, public domain. It's fantastic - get it 10/10.
PROJECT UFO [2.04+](6 DISKS)
of UFO related text files from across the 100's of articles about famous and not so famous theorys, predictions, possibilitys and more.
CYBERPUNK #5 [2.04+](2 DISKS)
issue of this popular SciFi/Cyber Disk Mag. on all things HiTech in the world today.
FRUIT KITCHEN (2, AGA, HD)
cooooool demo. Has some really great texture sequences and Doom style texture mapped The music is cool too. Fantastic 10/10.
FANATIC: HATE 2 (2 DISKS, AGA, HD)
polished demo. Features superb hand drawn art- and some great effects including a really good which you appear to turn around in as you zoom 10/10.
ABYSS: PIXELSTORM (AGA)
of the greatest artwork you'll ever see on your All hand drawn here - no scans whatsoever. your friends with this EXCELLENT collection from talented individuals. 11/10.
INSTINCT DEMO (2 DISKS) [AGA HD]
coaster ride of foot tapping music effects and morphin' doughnuts. Superb graphics and with the latest array of effects. 9/10.
GALLERY 2 [AGA]

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C64

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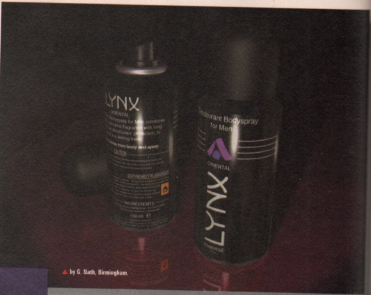
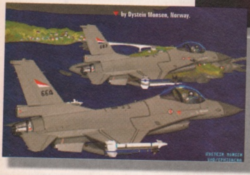
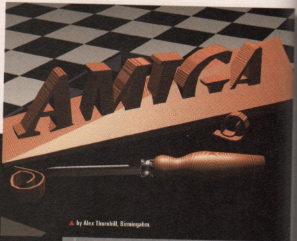

LYNX
ORIENTAL
CAUTION
INGREDIENTS
Deodorant Bodyspray for Men
ORIENTAL
LYNX

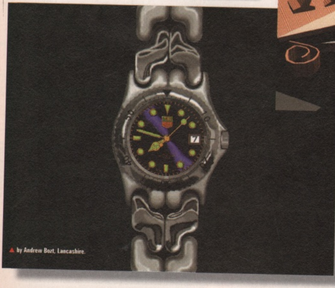
▲ by G. Nath, Birmingham.


664
OYSTEIN MONSEN

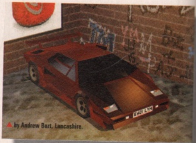
▼ by Oystein Monsen, Norway.



▲ by Alex Thornhill, Birmingahm.



▲ by Andrew Bozt, Lancashire.



▲ by Andrew Bozt, Lancashire.

AMIGA workshop

IMAGINE 3.0 92

As we continue our guide to 3D rendering with our January cover disk we try our hand at adding some more realism to objects.

Imagine 3.0 p92

OCTAMED 5.04 96

In our final tutorial (well for the moment anyway) we explore the area of synthsounds and what they can do.

AMIGA E 98

Some more enhancements and tweaking are in order for our GUI and text finding tool!

COMMS 100

How to set up your own FTP site to get more from the internet and, as usual, all the gossip on the Comms scene.

SOUND LAB 103

Now that AudioMaster has finished its guest spot, Tony Horgan restarts soundlab with a look at what public domain can offer for Amiga music lovers.

Golden Joysticks p107

SUBSCRIPTIONS 106

You may have noticed the slight increase in our cover price but don't worry because our special offer of 12 for the price of eight is still here.

GOLDEN JOYSTICKS 107

It's time to vote for who will be the winner of the highest gaming accolades known to man, the golden joystick. Don't miss your chance.

POINTS OF VIEW 120

Messrs Leaning, Dykes, Bettinson and Horgan set up four separate soapboxes and tell how it is and what should be done about it.

Points of View p120

Regulars

FAQ 113

The internet has been going strong for some time now but still there are a lot of unanswered questions out there. We do our best to reply.

Q&A MASTERCLASS 114

Arexx is back (well it never went away really) and John Kennedy is only too delighted to explain and explore it for those of you who mightn't be familiar with it.

Q+A 116

The Q&A sack of letters never seems to empty. It's always there, in the corner of the office, brimming over with readers enquiries. Mat and Tony to the rescue.

BACKCHAT 118

Team Talk has gone (well for the time being anyway) to make way for more of your letters. If you want it back write to 'bring back the chat ' at the usual address.

Hmm what to do? Let me draw your attention to the highlights of this jam packed workshop section: first, turn to the Golden Joysticks Awards nominations and have your say in who deserves to be rewarded. Then check out the Imagine, OctaMed and Amiga E tutorials before turning to look at Tony's Sound lab. After that a browse through the regular question and answers pages would be in order. That's my advice anyway.

Materials and textures

Imagine 3.0

PART 2

This month our tutorial on 3D rendering with Imagine 3.0 looks at adding more realism to your objects utilising textures.

When you render an object with the default settings it appears as a dull grey colour. The material of which the object is defined is a matt grey with no distinguishing characteristics. It's boring and totally unrealistic.

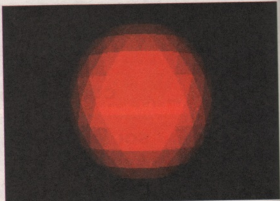
There are two main ways to a control the appearance of an object: adjusting the material from which the object is made and applying textures. As this is such an important part of rendering, *Imagine* provides a great deal of control over defining and altering materials and textures. It is understandable therefore that in order to make realistic objects, you need to spend some time experimenting and getting them right.

Go to the Detail editor and add a Sphere object from the Objects/Add/Primitives menu. Quick render it and you'll get a dull, grey sphere. This happens when the default texture is used.

Now make sure the object is selected (in purple) by pressing F1 and then use the Attributes menu option in the Functions menu. You should see the special attributes requestor appear: this is where you will change the appearance of the sphere.

The easiest attribute to change is the colour of the sphere. To do this, click in the colour box and then adjust the colour sliders. The sliders will have different settings depending on what attribute has been selected. Some settings (such as Color) require all three to be adjusted, some (like Hardness) have a single bar to move. Others involve changing a single number or clicking an on/off switch.

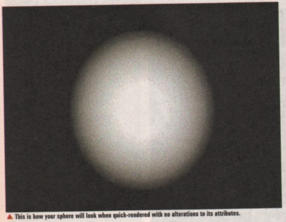
For now, adjust the colours to a nice orange shade, and then click on OK. When you render the object again, the colour will have been changed.



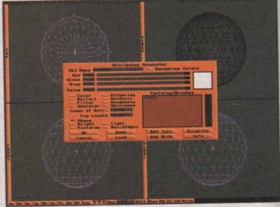
▲ Here's another sphere, pretty basic but with a little colour change from its original white state.

Phong-tastic

You may have noticed the Phong option in the requestor: this is an important control, as it provides a form of smoothing. As *Imagine*



▲ This is how your sphere will look when quick-rendered with no alterations to its attributes.



PERSP
Attributes Requester
Obj Name
Randomize Colors
Red
Green
Blue
Value
Textures/Brushes
<new>
Color
Reflect
Filter
Specular
Dithering
Hardness
Roughness
Shininess
Index of Refr.
Fog Length
✓ Phong
Bright
Fastdraw
Light
QuickEdges
OK
Cancel
Save
Load
Add Txtr
Add Brsh
Priority
Info
RIGHT

▲ Setting the Index of Refraction parameter to something like 1.08, in conjunction with some transparency will lead the sphere to distort any light that passes through it in a similar way to a glass ball.

Flying Saucers

As promised last month, we can now add a little detail to our flying saucer object by means of some textures and physical attributes. To start with, the saucer was split into two: the dome part was removed by using the Pick Faces option from the Detail Editor. This left only the saucer, which was given a DeathStar texture and some extra little spheres for added interest. The Dome was then created as a simple spherical object and given a slight blue colour along with a great deal of transparency.

If it wasn't so transparent you wouldn't be able to see the grotesque alien being inside: composed entirely of spheres and tubes and given some colours and textures of a suitable alien nature.

The planet in the background was created with the Agate textures as suggested, and the lunar surface below is a simple plain which has been distorted a bit and given a nice rough texture. We haven't explored the Action editor yet, but that's where you will find the option to add some stars to the inky-black sky and even add a little ambient lighting.

The final image was rendering in 24-bit colour at a resolution of 1024 by 768, which took about 12 minutes on an A4000/040. And all this is without a single brush mapping: something that we'll be having a look at next month.

objects are constructed from small triangles or 'facets', you would not normally expect a sphere to appear very smooth as a result. This is what the Phong shading option does: it smooths the edges. Although this is great for spheres (and therefore drops of liquid, planets and so on), there will be plenty of occasions when you create an object which you want to have a sharp edge. In these occasions, make sure that Phong is clicked off.

Next to the Phong option is the Light switch. Click here and your object will become a light source, with the ability to light any other objects in the scene and cast shadows. This probably won't be used very often because *Imagine* allows light sources to be easily added at the Stage Editor screen.

Light sources are different from Bright objects. When you make an object Bright, it simply means an object will never appear shaded. A good use for Bright is when adding illuminated windows to a spaceship: create a yellow rectangle, make it bright and paste it all over the space ship.

Textures

As well as the modelling the physical appearance on the object, it is possible to adjust the external appearance by adding an extra 'coat of paint' by means of a texture or mapping. In fact, mappings can also control some physical attributes and even the shape, but we'll come back to that soon enough.

Let's start with the textures. *Imagine* has a large number of built-in textures and they are a great asset. These are called 'procedural' textures because they are built-in and calculated specially each time a render takes place. The advantage of procedural textures is that they consume only a small amount of memory and provide excellent results, even when an object is viewed close up. With textures made from bitmap images, the texture can start to look blocky when magnified: this doesn't happen with procedural textures. The disadvantage is the slight increase in rendering time required, and it can also be tricky trying to predict what the texture will look like.

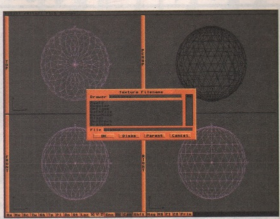
Experiment

To experiment with textures, start with the simple object again, and switch off all the other attributes. Now click on the "Add Txtr" button, and locate the drawer called 'textures'. You should see a list of different files appear.

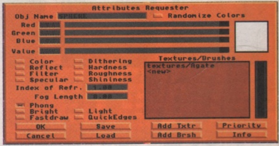
Each of these files is a different texture which can be applied to your object, so pick one, the first one: Agate. You'll see that a new requestor appears. Each texture has a special window which allows you to control the various different options. Settle for the default and you will see that the Attribute requestor returns, but there is now a new entry in the list to the bottom right.

It is possible to add many different textures and mappings to each object, and the list helps you keep track of them all. You can edit each individually from this list, or remove them altogether if required. (Highlight the texture and then click on the Info button to edit or delete it) You can also decide which texture has priority: but don't add too many as rendering time can increase dramatically.

With your newly textured object perform a Quickrender and you'll see that the Agate texture has provided a very swish marble effect. In fact, if you adjust the colours you can quickly knock up an excellent alien planet. As with most textures, the base colour is



▲ Imagine's mathematical textures allow you to wrap your objects in all sorts of weird and wonderful surfaces.



Attributes Requester
Obj Name SPHERE
☐ Randomize Colors
Red
Green
Blue
Value
☐ Color
☐ Reflect
☐ Filter
☐ Specular
☐ Dithering
☐ Hardness
☐ Roughness
☐ Shininess
Index of Refr. 1.00
Fog Length 0.00
☑ Phong
☐ Bright
☐ Fastdraw
☐ Light
☐ QuickEdges
Textures/Brushes
textures/Agate
<new>
OK
Cancel
Save
Load
Add Txtr
Add Brsh
Priority
Info

▲ Once you've got your texture loaded, you can embellish it with alterations to the attributes settings.

▲ The 'Agate' texture renders a nice subtle surface, as shown here. Ideal for planets etc.

important as the colours of the texture will let it show through. Also, remember that the physical attributes still apply so you can make a marble sphere which looks hard and shiny, or one which looks dull and rough.

There are so many different textures that there really isn't time to go through them all in turn: you should spend some time experimenting with each. A good trick is to play with the default settings, because very often you will be able to create some wildly different effects by entering unusual values or numbers.■

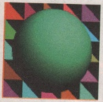
John Kennedy

Physical Properties

The Physical Attributes properties have the following names and functions. You should experiment with them in turn and together to create the appearance of your chosen material.

COLOR	Adjusts the colour of the object.
REFLECT	Adjusts the ability of the object to reflect its surroundings.
FILTER	Adjusts the transparency of the object.
SPECULAR	Adjusts the colour and brightness of any highlights on the object.
HARDNESS	The harder the object, the smaller the highlight area.
ROUGHNESS	Make the object's surface appear less perfect and smooth.
SHININESS	Applies a special 'sheen' to an object, like the shine in a porcelain sink.
DITHERING	The degree of colour mixing. Keep at default of 255 for most objects.
PHONG	When switched on, performs smoothing on the object.
LIGHT	When switched on, makes the object into a light source.
BRIGHT	When switched on, does not allow the object to appear shaded.
FOG LENGTH	Makes the object transparent and misty
INDEX OF REFR	Adjusts the Refractive Index of the object, and controls how much light is bent when it passes though the object.

The Effects of the Physical Properties



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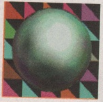
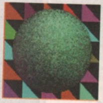
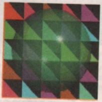
filter	0
specular	0
hardness	0
roughness	0
bright	off
foglength	0
refr. index	1



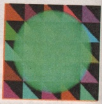
reflection	128
filter	0
specular	255
hardness	0
roughness	0
bright	off
foglength	0
Index of refr	1



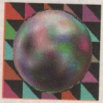
reflection	128
filter	0
specular	255
hardness	255
roughness	255
bright	off
foglength	0
Index of refr	1



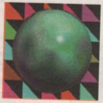
reflection	0
filter	128
specular	255
hardness	255
roughness	0
brightness	off
foglength	0
Index of refr	1



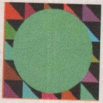
reflection	0
filter	255
specular	0
hardness	0
roughness	0
bright	off
foglength	32
Index of refr	1



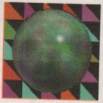
reflection	255
filter	0
specular	0
hardness	0
roughness	0
bright	off
foglength	0
Index of refr	1



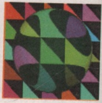
reflection	128
filter	0
specular	255
hardness	255
roughness	0
bright	off
foglength	0
Index of refr	1



reflection	128
filter	0
specular	255
hardness	255
roughness	0
bright	on
foglength	0
Index of refr	1



reflection	255
filter	128
specular	255
hardness	255
roughness	0
bright	off
foglength	0
Index of refr	1



reflection	0
filter	128
specular	0
hardness	0
roughness	0
bright	off
foglength	0
Indexofrefr	1.1

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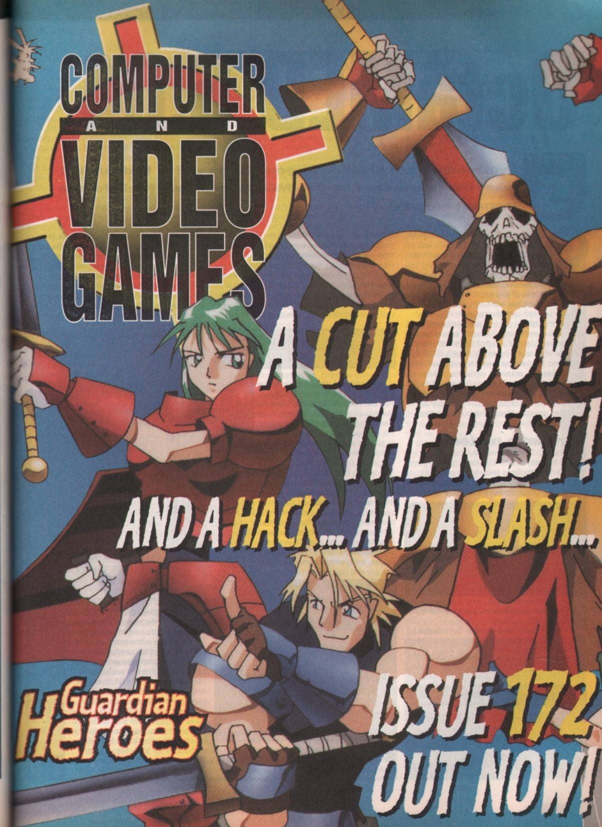
........1.1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OctaMED 5.04

PART 5

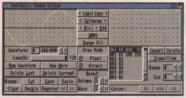
Synthsounds will brighten up your life no end ... find out just what they are in the last OctaMED tutorial ever (well, for the moment anyway).

Continuing our look at alternatives to samples (we examined MIDI last month) ,this month it's the turn of 'synthsounds'. These memory saving but simple and effective noises are especially popular with nostalgic C64 die-hards (come on, some of you must still be addicted to this old machine), although the editor window is a tad complicated at first glance.

First though, to get you prepared, we'll deal with octave-switching. Everyone knows how to play notes C-1to G#3, right? But what about the rest of octave 3 (notes A-3, A#3, B-3)? If you press F2 then the lower octave (keys Z to M) will become octave 2, while the middle keys (Q to U) become octave 3. Keys F3 to F5 work similarly; you'll need them this month because synth sounds can use five octaves (samples use only three). Press F1 to return to normal.

Synthetic material

Assuming OctaMED's loaded, press F3 to switch to octaves 3+4 (the cycle gadget near the top-right confirms this). Make sure Edit mode is off, then click EditSynthS (top-right). Hmm. Ever programmed a PC? Have no fear, you'll be churning out lovely bleepy sounds in no time.

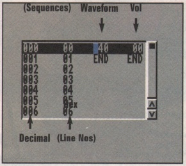


Select Project menu -> New Synthsound, click inside the left-hand large speckled box, then select Presets menu -> Sine Wave. Play the sound (you can stop it using the space bar). Do you find it too low? If so slide the Length slider (middle-left) to 64, then select Sine Wave again. The waveform's now halved, one octave higher.

It's all a bit like a mini sample editor. The two speckled waveform boxes are each 128 bytes long, the right hand one acting as a copy buffer and spare waveform. Click Copy > (top-middle) to transfer the sine wave to the buffer, then select Presets menu -> Noise. A hard sound, completely the opposite of the sine wave. Which is why we're going to mix them together! Click < Mix (top-middle) to do this and play the sound. Because Noise is random, if you repeatedly select it then click < Mix you'll get slightly different results each time.

< Copy
Copy >
< Exchange >
< Mix
< Add
UNDO
Range All

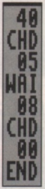
If this was all you could do in the editor – juggle with waveforms – it'd be nothing special. But not with OctaMED! See the mysterious box of numbers and ENDs on the right? Here you tell OctaMED what else to do with the synthsound; perhaps add volume changes or pitch slides. Most of these instructions consist of a three-letter 'keyword' and a hexadecimal value. For example, CHU 04 means 'change up four steps'; VBS 40 means 'set vibrato speed to 40'. The box is split into four columns. The first two are line numbers in decimal and hex, then we have the 'volume sequence' and 'pitch sequence'. We'll examine the volume sequence first. It contains a keywordless value 40; this means 'set volume to level 40', meaning level 64 in decimal, meaning full volume. Don't forget about the hex values, it's a common mistake.



Sound instructions

Firstly, we'll halve the volume by changing the 40 to a 20. Move the editor window to the very bottom of the screen (revealing the Edit check box), then press the Esc key to turn Editing on (it's the safest way). Now press right arrow and 2 – should have changed to 20? – then switch Editing off (Esc key) and play. OK, now switch editing on again and press left and 4 to change back to 40. And don't forget to switch editing off before playing!

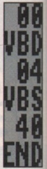
OK, we'll add a CHD 05 command now. Every three letter keyword is entered using one particular key; for CHD, this is the D key. So using the cursor keys, position the cursor over the E in the left hand END, then press Return to insert a new line. Now press D, 0 and 5 ... CHD 05 should be entered now. Switch editing off and play. Notice the fade? The volume CHanges Downwards five steps.



Good! Now try adding WAI 08 CHD 00 by turning Editing on, moving the cursor over E in left-handEND, press Return then press W for WAI. Press 0, 8, Return, D. You'll find that the last 00 is created for you. Turn Editing off and play. What you will hear is the volume starting to decrease. OctaMED walts for 8 time units then stops the volume fade (CHD with value 00). This is pretty neat, don't you think?

Always press return and esc!

I'm the first to admit that editing's fiddly, but just remember to press Return before inserting a command, and switch Editing off before you press play and on again to edit and you'll be OK. To delete a command or value, press Del. And be careful! OK, in exactly the same way we're going to add vibrato to the sound. Just like player command 04, there are two parts to the vibrato, depth (command VBD) and speed (VBS). We'll add VBD 04 VBS 40. So move up to the right hand E in END now (the pitch sequence), and enter the commands using key V for VBD and Shift-V for VBS. Remember: Return, command key, value, Return, command key, value, edit-



Some sequence commands

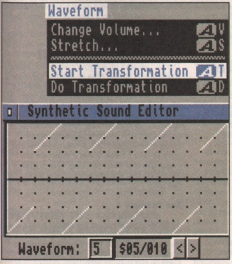
HLT (Halt, key H): Like END but can appear anywhere (not just at the end).
JMP (Jump, J): Skips to another sequence line.
JWS/JVS (Jump in waveform/volume sequence, Shift-J): Skips to another sequence line in the other sequence.
WAI (Wait, W): Pauses for given length of time.
SPD (Set speed, S): Sets sequence's execution speed.
CHD/CHU (Change down/up, D/U): Set volume/pitch change down/up speed.
RES (Reset, R): Resets note's pitch (after a CHD/U).
VBS/VBD (Vibrato speed/depth): Set vibrato.
ARP/ARE (Start/end arpeggio definition, A/E): Alternates between several given pitches. See end of tutorial for an example.

ing off, play. A bit of vibrato makes so much difference to a synth sound. Try changing the depth and speed values too (in hex remember!), especially the depth to (say) 50 because the sound is just so silly you'll have a right laugh. It's not very usable at this level, but interesting nonetheless.

Right. Quite enough of that synthsound. Select instrument 02, then select Project menu -> New Synthsound. Now, something I've neglected to tell you so far is that there can be more than one waveform in a synthsound, in fact up to 64. They're just like blocks in the Tracker editor, so much so that they have their own playing sequence!

Did you notice the unexplained 00 in the pitch sequence? That means 'play waveform number 00'. It's all becoming clearer ... what we're going to do is quite fancy. Over the space of eleven waveforms, a pulse wave will gradually change into a ramp up wave. So click in the left hand speckled box, then choose Presets menu -> Pulse Wave. It's too low again at the moment, but this time click Range All (middle of window), then click Double twice (bottom-right). This is just like changing the length to 32, but hey! We now know we can mark ranges in the synth editor as well as the sample editor. Marvellous!

Next, click New Waveform (bottom-left) ten times to add ten new waveforms (the last one should be number 10). Now select Presets menu -> Ramp Up, then click Double twice again. At the moment the white range is a bit glaring, but we can switch it off using the left-hand of the three Cursor buttons (far bottom-right). Actually, it's not really switched off, just set to zero. To complete things here, the middle button marks a range bang in the middle, the right-hand button at the right.



More magic

Time for some more magic. Select Waveform menu -> Start Transformation. Then, to move to the first waveform, click the < arrow underneath the left hand speckled box while holding down Shift. (You should see the pulse wave.) Now select Waveform menu -> Do Transformation. Nothing happened? OK, use the > arrow (without Shift) to display the other waveforms, and you should see the pulse wave slowly transforming into the ramp up. Amazing! So OctaMED's filled in the waveforms between 0 and 10 with the intervening stages, the musical equivalent of morphing. But they won't all be played yet; remember the playing sequence?

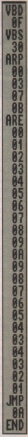
Currently only waveform 00 is played, so we need to enter numbers 01 to 0A (hex) into the pitch sequence. Boring? No! Exciting! And OctaMED, as ever, has a handy shortcut. Add number 0A to the pitch sequence (move to END, press Return, change the 00to 0A). Move up to the 0A and click Transition (on the right). Hey Presto! Move down to END, then add an 01 and click Transition again. Finally we need to jump back up to line 00, causing a repeat. JMP 00 will do this, so add it to the end (use the J key for JMP). And play the sound.

We're not doing bad at the moment, but it could be much better, so here's a couple of bonus commands. Firstly, add VBD 0F VBS 30 to the very top of the pitch sequence, using keys V and Shift-V as before. When entering the keywords, make sure the cursor is at its leftmost position (on the first letter of a keyword or on the left of a value) before pressing Return: another important lesson. Managed it? See if the sequence agrees with the screenshot on this page.

Finally, let me introduce a particularly spooky command: arpeggio. Arpeggios are almost like chords, except the notes of the chord are played one by one very quickly. You'll see what I mean when you've tried it out. Move back to the very top of the pitch sequence, and add ARP 00 03 07 0B ARE, using the A key for ARP and E for ARE. The values between the ARP and ARE are the differences in semitones from the bass note ... that's right, just experiment. You'll find more synthetic sound info in the box-outs.

If you want to save your synthetic masterpieces, close the window and select Instr menu -> Save Instrument -> IFF 8SVX Format for each one. And that's it. Happy music-making folks. ■

Ed Wiles



```
VBD
 0F
VBS
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ARP
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 03
 07
 0B
ARE
 00
 01
 02
 03
 04
 05
 06
 07
 08
 09
 0A
 09
 08
 07
 06
 05
 04
 03
 04
 03
 02
 01
JMP
 0A
END
```
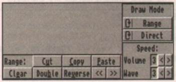

More synthetic tools



Have a good doodle! Instead of relying on preset waves, try drawing waveforms freehand using the mouse. For lines, click on the first Draw Mode cycle gadget (middle of screen). Click on it a second time and then dragging the mouse will mark a range instead, just like in the sample editor. The range affecting buttons are at the bottom-left; all should be self-explanatory, apart from perhaps << >> which shifts the ranged waveform left or right.

The Speed arrows set the execution speed of the volume and pitch sequences (pitch is called Wave here). The values are in fact the number of 'ticks' between each sequence line (see November's tutorial for a reminder of ticks). In the Waveform menu, use Change Volume as in the sample editor (50 halves the range's volume). Stretch is weird, and I haven't found a use for this one yet, but do try it out: a positive number stretches right, negative left.

Any questions?

If you need to find out more why not join the MED Users Group? Among other things it produces a bi-monthly disk-mag, TI. Contact Richard Bannister: 6 Glevum Road, Swindon SN3 4AF (01793825219). For MIDI advice, your man is Kevan Craft: 12 Moult Road, Runcorn WA72BH (01928 563762). And, well, there's me I suppose: 9 Kinkland Wynd, Dumfries DG1 4ES (01387 265776), or e-mail e.d.wiles@durham.ac.uk.

Amiga E Tutorial

PART 3

So far we've made a simple GUI and a basic text-finding program to control it. This month we'll make some enhancements to the code.

For compatibility with Workbench 1.3 users, the E function 'ReadStr' uses the old, unbuffered DOS library functions. This means that it is not as fast as it could be. Luckily there are several simple ways to improve matters, and one of the simplest and most effective is to use the Async module, written by Michael Zucchi.

Documentation on the Async module can be found in the directory 'Src/Tools/Async', but basically what it does is read lumps of a file into buffers in memory before they are actually needed. At the same time your program can be getting on with other things, and when it tries to read the next line from the file it will all happen very quickly, because the line will already have been read into a buffer.

Incorporating the Async functions is very easy. All we need to do is use 'as_Open' and 'as_Close' instead of 'Open' and 'Close' lines, and update 'myreadstr' to use 'as_FGetS'. The call to 'Open' in 'scanfile' can be replaced with:

```
fh:=as_Open(file, OLDFILE, 3, 5000)
```

The extra parameters specify the number of buffers to be used (three) and the size of each one (5000 bytes) – these are the recommended values. This is not quite the whole story, since we need to raise an exception if 'as_Open' fails. For this reason it is simplest to factor it all into a new function, say 'myopen'. A call to 'myopen' would then be identical to a call to 'Open'.

See Example 1

Replacing 'Close' is much easier, but for consistency we should factor it into a new function, say 'myclose'. The new line in the exception handler of 'scanfile' is then:

```
IF fh THEN myclose(fh)
```

and the definition of 'myclose' is:

```
PROC myclose(fh) IS as_Close(fh)
```

Finishing off the trio of I/O functions, we can update the 'myreadstr' function.

See Example 2

Notice that if the call to 'as_FGetS' succeeds then the length of the E-string 's' is set using 'SetStr' to be its length calculated using 'StrLen'. This is because 'as_FGetS' is not an E-string function, so if it is used to alter the contents of 's' then 's' must be repaired (in exactly this way) before it can be used as an E-string again.

Stopping the search mechanism!

Now that we've finished speeding up the search we can concentrate on stopping it! The first step is to add a new button to press. To tidy up the GUI we'll put the collection of (now) three buttons in a column, so we'll replace the two lines:

```
[BUTTON,{b_go},'GO!'],
[BUTTON,{b_quit},'Quit']
```

with:

```
[COLS,
   [SPACEH],
   [BUTTON,{b_go},'GO!'],
   [SPACEH],
   [BUTTON,{b_stop},'Stop'],
   [SPACEH],
   [BUTTON,{b_quit},'Quit'],
   [SPACEH]
]
```

The 'COLS' group is just like the 'EQROWS' group, except it arranges its gadgets in columns and they aren't made equal in size. The 'SPACEH' gadget is a dummy gadget that acts as stretchy glue between the other gadgets. This has the effect of spacing the gadgets out neatly. You might like to experiment by removing some of the 'SPACEH' lines (this is where the sheer speed of the E compiler comes in very handy, since you can see the effect of your changes extremely quickly).

The action function, 'b_stop', should somehow stop the search. Those of you who have played with the current program will have noticed that the GUI does not respond whilst the search is in progress. In particular, you'll have noticed that resizing the GUI does not take full effect until the search has finished. So how can we react to a press of the 'Stop' button whilst the search is going?

Checking the GUI

The DIY version of 'easygui' (which we called 'myeasygui') shows how to use the 'guimessage' function of EasyGUI to handle any GUI events (like resizing or activating a gadget). So, all we need to do is call this function if there are any messages waiting to be processed. Normally you would 'Wait' until a message arrives, but this would stop your program doing anything else. So, in this case, we just want to take a peek to see if there are any messages that need handling. This is one of the things that the system function 'SetSignal' can do.

See Example 3

As you can see from the definition of 'checkgui', if 'SetSignal(0,0)' contains one of the GUI's signal bits then there's a message waiting to be processed. The 'guimessage' function will then do all the necessary work, and this may involve calling one of the GUI's

Example 1

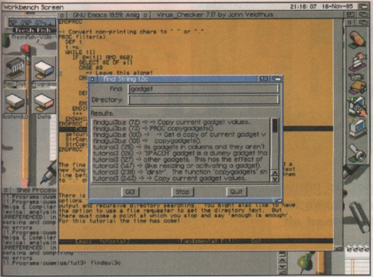
```
PROC myopen(file, mode)
  DEF fh
  IF fh:=as_Open(file, mode, 3, 5000)
    RETURN fh
  ELSE Raise(ERR_OPEN)
  ENDIF
ENDPROC
```

Example 2

```
PROC
myreadstr(fh, s)
  DEF res IF res:=as_FGetS(fh, s, StrMax(s)) THEN SetStr(s, StrLen(s))
ENDPROC res
```

Example 3

```
-> Handle any GUI messages (e.g., resizing).
PROC checkgui()
  IF SetSignal(0,0) AND gh.sig
    IF guimessage(gh)>=0 THEN Raise(ERR_QUIT)
  ENDIF
ENDPROC
```



```
ENDPROC

-> Convert non-printing chars to " " or ".".
PROC filter(s)
  DEF t
  t:=s
  WHILE t[]
    IF 0=(t[] AND $60)
      SELECT $E OF s[]
      CASE $0
        -> Leave this alone!
```

Find: gadget

Directory:

Results:

```
findgui3b.e (72) -> -> Copy current gadget values..
findgui3b.e (73) -> PROC copygadgets().
findgui3b.e (100) ->    -> Get a copy of current gadget v
findgui3b.e (101) ->    copygadgets().
tutorial3 (125) -> its gadgets in columns and they aren't
tutorial3 (126) -> 'SPACEH' gadget is a dummy gadget tha
tutorial3 (127) -> other gadgets.  This has the effect of
tutorial3 (147) -> (like resizing or activating a gadget).
tutorial3 (238) -> 'dirstr'.  The function 'copygadgets' sh
tutorial3 (243) -> -> Copy current gadget values..
```

```
output and recursive directory searching.  You might also like to have
the option to use a file requester to set the directory text.  But
there must come a point at which you stop and say 'enough is enough'.
For this tutorial the time has come!
```

```
11.Programs:cuam
11.Programs:cuam
Amiga E Compiler
lexical analysin
UNREFERENCED: in
parsing and comp
no errors
11.Programs:cuam
Amiga E Compiler
lexical analysin
UNREFERENCED: in
parsing and compiling ...
no errors
11.Programs:cuamiga/tut3> findgui3c
```

▲ **Here's our find tool GUI being tested while the source code lives in the background on a text editor. This type of arrangement allows the programmer to make quick changes to the GUI code, recompile and witness the results in a short cycle without changing screens.**

action functions. If the result of 'guimessage' is negative then everything is fine (see the documentation on EasyGUI), but if it's zero or positive then the GUI should be closed. We can do this by raising the 'ERR_QUIT' exception (as if the 'Quit' button had been pressed).

This 'checkgui' function need not be called too often, just at key points in the program. In our program there's only one optimal place: in the loop that reads lines from a file. This means that the 'Stop' button could stop the search even if it were in the middle of reading a large file. In fact, stopping the search is just a matter of raising a new exception, say 'ERR_STOP'. This would eventually be handled by the 'go' function and ignored (unlike the 'ERR_QUIT' exception which is re-thrown).

Solving an obvious problem with the GUI

Now we've made the GUI appear to act asynchronously to our search there are some new problems: there is the possibility of the user pressing the 'GO!' button and causing another search to begin whilst one is already in progress! Also, the user may change the value of the find string (or, less importantly, the directory string) and so change the search in mid flow.

Luckily, these problems are quite simple to cure. We can prevent multiple searches being started at once with the addition of a global variable to act as a ready flag. Once this is done, we can safely make copies of the current values of the directory and find strings before starting the search and use these copies during the search.

```
DEF
ready=TRUE
```

The 'b_go' action function should now check and set this flag instead of just blindly calling the 'go' function.

```
PROC
  b_go(info)-> Only go if not busy.
  IF ready
    ready:=FALSE go()
    ready:=TRUE
  ENDIF
ENDPROC
```

The 'Stop' button can now raise an exception if the ready flag is not set, i.e., if the search is in progress. (If it raised an exception when the search is not in progress then it would have the same effect as the 'Quit' button – try to work out why.)

```
PROC
  b_stop(info)-> Interrupt if busy.
  IF ready=FALSE THEN Raise(ERR_STOP)
ENDPROC
```

To make things a little easier to change, we'll name the copies of the E-strings 'xfindstr' and 'xdirstr'. In fact, it'll be simpler to make the GUI use these E-strings and leave the search using 'findstr' and 'dirstr'. The function 'copygadgets' should be called as the first line of the 'go' function, to set up the copies.

```
-> Copy current gadget values.
PROC copygadgets()
  StrCopy(findstr, xfindstr)
  StrCopy(dirstr, xdirstr)
ENDPROC
```

The Source Code

We included the source code and executable examples for all three parts of this Amiga E tutorial on last month's cover disks. If you missed out on the February issue, you can order your copy from our back issues department. Call them on 01858 468 888.

Further improvements

The program is now largely complete. It's fast, responsive and pretty useful, but there are a couple of minor improvements which might make it nicer. The first is the fact that all Intuition text or number entry gadgets do not cause an activation event unless the return or TAB key is pressed in them. So, if you type some text in the directory gadget and then click on some other part of the GUI the 'xdirstr' will not be updated. This is a common problem and even commercial programs like Wordworth have large sections of their manuals devoted to telling the user to hit the return key in text entry gadgets!

Even though this is a common problem, there is a very simple solution. The actual contents of the gadget can be extracted using the 'specialinfo' element, which, in the case of text gadgets, is a pointer to a 'stringinfo' object. This object has a 'buffer' element which contains the current contents of the gadget. This string can then be copied to the GUI's E-string using the EasyGUI function 'setstr'.

See Example 4

The 'gad' parameter is an identification of a gadget in the EasyGUI list (just like 'resgad' from the last tutorial). We can identify 'dirgad' and 'findgad' with the appropriate EasyGUI gadget, and then call 'getcurrstr' in the 'copygadgets' function for each one, just before copying the E-strings.

```
-> Copy current gadget values.
PROC copygadgets()
-> Extract strings from gadgets.
  getcurrstr(findgad)
  getcurrstr(dirgad)
  StrCopy(findstr, xfindstr)
  StrCopy(dirstr, xdirstr)
ENDPROC
```

The final minor improvement is an exercise for the eager reader: add a new function to filter out non-printing characters from a matched text line before it is reported. (The simplest approach is to convert them to '.' characters.)

There is a lot scope for extending this program: you might like options to search for whole words, ignore case differences and recursive directory searching. You might also like to have the option to use a file requester to set the directory text. But there must come a point at which you stop and say 'enough is enough'. For this tutorial that time has come!■

Jason Hulance

Example 4

```
-> Copy string from gadget buffer.
PROC getcurrstr(gad)
  DEF g:PTR TO gadget g:=findgadget(gh, gad) setstr(gh, gad, g.specialinfo::stringinfo.buffer)
ENDPROC
```

Wired World

PART 8

This month we set up some new FTP clients to make it even easier to download all those lovely files.

AmiTCP comes with a reasonable File Transfer Protocol (FTP) client known as *NcFTP*. Not too many people actually realise how powerful this CLI based client is so we'll cover a few of the lesser known but interesting nonetheless facts before going on to other methods of getting those files onto your machine via FTP.

No need NcFTP

Firstly, there's no need to activate *NcFTP* with the name of the site every time you use it. Create a text file inside your home directory. Your home directory will be inside the 'usr' directory in your *AmiTCP* main directory. The name of it will correspond to your default login name. In my case, it's 'mat'. Call the text file '.netrc' if it's not already there. Insert the following text:

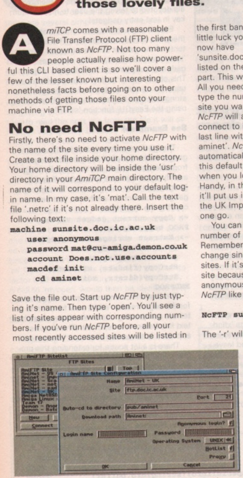
```
machine sunsite.doc.ic.ac.uk
    user anonymous
    password mat@cu-amiga.demon.co.uk
    account Does.not.use.accounts
    macdef init
      cd aminet
```

Save the file out. Start up *NcFTP* by just typing it's name. Then type 'open'. You'll see a list of sites appear with corresponding numbers. If you've run *NcFTP* before, all your most recently accessed sites will be listed in the first bank. With a little luck you should now have 'sunsite.doc.ic.ac.uk' listed on the second part. This won't move. All you need to do is type the number of the site you want and *NcFTP* will attempt to connect to it. Note the last line with 'cd aminet'. *NcFTP* will automatically perform this default operation when you log in. Handy, in this case, as it'll put us in the root Aminet directory on the UK Imperial College Aminet mirror all in one go.

You can also just type 'open' and then the number of the site if you know what it is. Remember the first bank of numbers will change since this represents your last called sites. If it's difficult to get onto your desired site because it has a maximum number of anonymous users you could try launching *NcFTP* like this;

```
NcFTP sunsite.doc.ic.ac.uk -r
```

The '-r' will make *NcFTP* keep retrying the connection until it gets though.



AmiFTP Site Configuration

Name: AmiNet - UK
Site: ftp.doc.ic.ac.uk
Port: 21
Auto-cd to directory: pub/aminet
Download path: Aminet:
Anonymous login? ☑
Operating System: UNIX
HotList ☑
Proxy ☐

AmiFTP Sitelist
FTP Sites
Top
AmiFTP Site
AmiNet - US
Aminet - Imp
Aminet - Sca
Aminet - net
Aminet - pad
AmiNet - UK
Amiga NetBSD
Amiga Linux
Team 17
Demon - Anon
Demon - Batc
New
Connect
Login name
Password
OK
Cancel

▲ Entering a new FTP site into AmiFTP; most FTP sites will just need the name, site address and a click on the anonymous login box which you can call up using Hotlist.

Beyond text

The Amiga has moved beyond the text based interface and accordingly there are some excellent GUI FTP clients available. No horrible case-sensitive Unix interfaces to deal with. The choice is simple a matter of taste. My favourite is *AmFTP* by Oliver Wagner, author of the brilliant *AmIRC* client. Apparently Amiga Technologies agree with me as it's going in the Amiga Surf Internet bundle. Those inclined to dislike MUI might like to try the next best thing in the form of *AmiFTP*. That's right, the only difference is the 'i'. There's also another nice MUI client called '*mftp*'. Both of these can be found in the following Aminet paths;

util/tcp/AmiFTP.lha
util/tcp/mftp1_31.lha

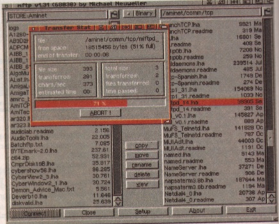
AmFTP is still under development with regular new versions being released on a separate FTP site. Have a look for the latest in this FTP site and directory;

ftp.vapor.com/support/AmFTP/

Each of these clients operates in a slightly different way in terms of setting up sites to call etc. *AmFTP* and *mftp* are similar to disk filers. They display two listers, one of which is a directory on your local drive and the other is the remove FTP directory.

Generally all that's required is to click on a file on the FTP site, after moving into the desired directory etc., then clicking on download or the equivalent. It'll be FTPed into the directory on the other lister.

Similarly, if you click on a file on your drive and then the send/put gadget, it'll be uploaded to the FTP site.

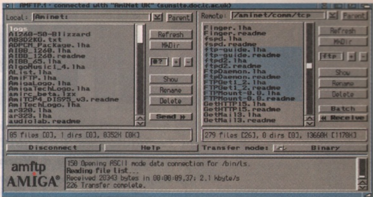


mftp v1.31 (68030) by Michael Neuweller

Transfer Stat
file: /aminet/comm/tcp/mftpd_
free space: 18515456 bytes (51% full)
end of transfer: 00:00:06
file size: 393
transferred: 281
chars/sec: 373
estimated time: 00:
total size: 3
transferred: 2
files transferred: 0
time passed: 0
71 %

STORE:Aminet
Binary
/aminet/comm/tcp
logs
A1260-
AB3D2
ADPCM
AIBB_1
AIBB_1
AIBB_6
AlgoMu
AList.lh
AmigaL
AmigaT
amirc_
AmiTCP
AmiTec
ar320.l
ar323.l
audiolab.readme 2.156
AudioTools.lha 22.005
Batchftp.txt 7.085
BYTEmark-2.0.lha 237.61
c64.zip 52.931
CmprDisk198.lha 35.817
cybershow56.lha 96.285
CyberView2_3.lha 30.761
CyberWindow2_1.lha 30.724
Demon_Advice_Mac.txt 5.561
Deverb10.lha 11.646
diskvalid.lha 25.639
nchTCP.lha 9921
nchTCP.readme 319
.lha 16801
readme 408
pOb.lha 7208
pOb.readme 259
ldaemons.lha 239514
ldaemons.readme 485
p-Spanish.lha 1749
p-Spanish.readme 274
p1_31.lha 154069
p1_31.readme 1033
tpd_14.lha 38905
tpd_14.readme 391
_v0.1.lha 145827
_v0.1.readme 889
MuFS_Telnetd.lha 141828
MuFS_Telnetd.readme 787
MUIAdt.lha 44003
MUIAdt.readme 1191
named.lha 9143
named.readme 553
NameServer.lha 37271
NameServer.readme 906
napsaterm3.8b.lha 187644
napsaterm3.8b.readme 1194
Netdial4_0.lha 20736
Netdial4_0.readme 307
ABORT !
copy
move
rename
delete
view
Connect
Close
Setup
About
Exit

▲ Usage of mftp (as seen here) or AmFTP means that the GUI interface can be nicely configured to how you like it care of MUI. Nice progress bars when downloading are a common feature of all GUI FTP clients.



```
logs
A1260-50-Blizzard
AB3D2KG.txt
ADPCM_Package.lha
AIBB_1260.lha
AIBB_1260.readme
AIBB_65.lha
AlgoMusic1_4.lha
AList.lha
AmiFTP.lha
AmigaLogo.lha
AmigaTechLogo.lha
amirc_beta.lzx
AmiTCP4_DIS95_v3.readme
AmiTechLogo.lha
ar320.lha
ar323.lha
audiolab.readme
85 files [0], 1 dirs [0], 8352K [0K]
```

```
Finger.lha
Finger.readme
fspd.lha
fspd.readme
ftp-guide.lha
ftp-guide.readme
ftpd2.lha
ftpd2.readme
FtpDaemon.lha
FtpDaemon.readme
FTPGet1_2.lha
FTPGet1_2.readme
FTPMount-0.8.lha
FTPMount-0.8.readme
GetHTTP15.lha
GetHTTP15.readme
GetMail13.lha
GetMail13.readme
279 files [26], 0 dirs [0], 13660K [1178K]
```

```
150 Opening ASCII mode data connection for /bin/ls.
Reading file list...
Received 20343 bytes in 00:00:09,37; 2.1 kbyte/s
226 Transfer complete.
```

▲ **The Surf Amiga pack's AmFTP, my favourite FTP client, tells you what's going on in the text window at the bottom. An excellent feature. The entire GUI is also configurable to contain either a local and a remote lister as shown above or a single remote lister as AmiFTP.**

Different AmiFTP

AmiFTP works a bit differently. It doesn't use two listers, just the one. The reason being that you will usually want to upload less often than download so just the remove FTP directory is displayed. When you do choose the send/put function, a file requester appears. *AmFTP* has an option in the menu called 'Directory tool'. Deselect this and it reverts to a single remote FTP lister in the *AmiFTP* style. When editing the site list in all these clients, it's as simple as inserting the name (which usually shows up in the hotlist), site name and the directory which the client should move to automatically when it does log on.

The download path will set the left hand lister directory on your local drives on *AmFTP* and mftp. With *AmiFTP*, there's just a text gadget at the bottom which selects the download path. Most have a simple check-box for anonymous log-in. You'll want to click this on all of your sites unless you specifically have an account there, for instance if you want to access your provider's FTP site to pick up some batch FTPs or the like. In this case, you would put your domain (ours would be 'cu-amiga') as the user name and your password (as found in your dialler script) for the password. Logging in to your providers FTP site in this way will mean that your batch FTPs will appear in the root directory. This is how it is with Demon though it may be different for other providers.

AmFTP wildcard

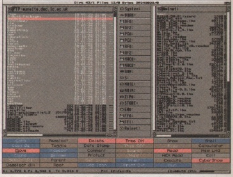
Where there are port number boxes, leave them at 21. Click on the hotlist box in *AmFTP* to have the site appear in a menu for quick selection. Whenever an option exists for Binary or ASCII/Text transfer, always choose Binary mode or your downloaded files will be corrupt. A nice feature in *AmFTP* is the wildcard function. For example, enter the comm/tcp directory of an Aminet mirror, then put '#?.readme' in the box next to the '+' and '-' gadget. Click on '+' and all the Aminet readme files for every file in the comm/tcp directory will be marked for download. On all the GUI clients, don't forget to use the pop-up gadgets right next to the FTP directory path box. This will give a short history of the last directories and you should be able to move back several directories without having to load each one.

GUI clients generally reinvent the wheel in terms of the directory utility aspect. The new *Directory Opus 5.1* has an FTP module which allows you to log a lister on to an FTP site. This is amazing in use. Simultaneous browsing and downloading via several listers is a real boon which makes *Directory Opus 5* an excellent addition to an Amiga 'net users arsenal. However, there's one often neglected file on the Aminet that just about accomplishes the same task for free. Grab it right away from the Aminet path;

util/tcp/FTPMount-0.8.lha

Amazing FTPMount

In the great tradition of high quality PD, it has a nice installer to take care of the niggly bits. I recommend you install it in your *AmiTCP*: assign and when it prompts you to decide what to do with the FTP mountlist, I recommend you choose 'WBStartup'. When this is done, *FTPMount* is basically installed. If you don't want it installed on your Workbench every boot, leave it in Devs: and activate it by executing the line; 'Mount Devs:FTP'. An obvious place to put this would be in your startnet script in *AmiTCP*:bin.



▲ **Here's DiskMAGIC accessing the Imperial College of London's Aminet mirror site via FTPMount. If you want to use your own directory util, FTPMount is just right for the job.**

Now for the magic; load up your favourite directory utility and access the FTP: device. Wow, look at that! You have a list of sites and providing you are linked up to the 'net at the time, if you enter any of these virtual directories, *FTPMount* will automatically log in and return a directory based on the contents of the remote FTP site of that name. Gosh, is that cool or what? Now how do you set up your own sites for *FTPMount*? You could simply enter FTP:sunsite.doc.ic.ac.uk/ and *FTPMount* will log in anonymously right away but it's obviously preferable to have your own favourite sites appear in the FTP: root directory.

Via the workbench

Via the Workbench, enter the directory where you had *FTPMount* installed. Inside the *FTPMount* directory should be another directory called 'Hosts'. Enter this. Here you'll see a load of icons representing directories with each one being a site of its own. Delete any from the default configuration that you won't ever use.

To create a new icon, select Window/New Drawer from the Workbench menu. An icon will appear. Select it with a single click and then choose Icon/Information from the Workbench menu again. In the resulting GUI that appears, all we need to do is add some ToolTypes which tell *FTPMount* what it needs to know about the site to log on. There's quite a few other commands which you can add to the Icon Tooltypes so have a look in *FTPMount*'s docs for more. Mostly you'll only need 'HOST' and 'ROOT'.

Pay special attention to the Default icon. These settings will be used if you just enter an FTP site manually by accessing FTP:<ftp site address>/. When logging in anonymously, it's customary to send your E-Mail address as the password with a user name of 'anonymous'. *FTPMount* does this automatically but you'll need to make sure the ENV variables 'USER' and 'HOST' are set to that the correct password is sent.

If you want to log in to a site with a password, you'll need to enter a 'USER' and a 'PASSWORD' tooltype with the appropriate values inserted afterwards. By the way, you don't have to use a directory utility either as the FTP: device can be accessed from the Workbench too. ■

Mat Bettinson.

Next Month

In the next issue we'll be looking at setting up an FTP server or daemon (a background program) on your own machine. Then other Internet users can download and upload material to your machine without any interaction from yourself. Also, if you'd like to let us know what other topics you'd like to see covered in the Wired World tutorials in the future, drop me a line at mat@cu-amiga.demon.co.uk or even Fidonet on 2:254/205.0. Surf on.

Net God speaks

Taking a break from Amiga specific comms for a while, I'd like to comment on a major problem with the Internet in general. Seeing as most of us use dial-up providers, we have to pay huge bills to our beloved British Telecom for off-peak local calls. It's now a crippling expense given the minuscule bandwidth available within the ever increasing congestion of the Internet. BT is setting up game lines where you get to play multi player games for just the cost of the call. How can this be justified? We pay BT the same rate AND a subscription charge to a third party Internet provider. Surely BT owes us more for the money? I feel that they should be charging the current rate for an Internet service and FREE off-peak local calls made to anyone else! Certainly the monopoly BT (still) enjoys should not be used to favour its own services. Therefore I urge all comms users to write to your MP about the matter. Allow political policies on telecommunications to influence your vote and investigate fully Labour's highly suspect 'BT alliance'. Make your voice clear. You're paying for it.

Surf's up!

Amiga Technologies' Internet 'Surf Pack' hits the beach whilst CU starts a Worms mailing list and a newsgroup is set up to support Blitz Basic 2 users.

News

AT 'surfing' pack

Amiga Technologies' highly welcome Internet 'Amiga Surf Pack' consists of an Amiga 1200 with 270MB HD, 14400 baud modem and an Internet software bundle along with the usual Magic Pack software. CU Amiga Magazine can now exclusively reveal the the contents of the bundle. The WWW Browser will be *Voyager*, as previewed last month. An IRC client will be bundled in the package too and this is none other than *AmIRC*, another excellent product from Oliver Wagner. Mr Wagner must be pretty busy at the moment since his *AmFTP* FTP client will also be included. The whole package is based around the AS225r2 TCP/IP software that Commodore developed in house but never made public. The new *VooDoo* software is included to handle E-Mail and VLT as a dial-in terminal. It's shaping up to be an absolutely killer Internet bundle, We only hope that Amiga Technologies will also make it available to existing Amiga owners!

Worms mailing list

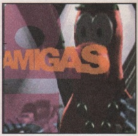
Team 17's smash-hit game *Worms* has virtually reached cult status in the Amiga community. Users of some general newsgroups and mailing lists have complained about the massive amount of *Worms* traffic inundating the conferences. CU Amiga Magazine has come to the rescue with a *Worms* E-Mail mailing list for all things pinky and wormy. To join, send a single line E-Mail to our mailing list server at listserv@cu-amiga.demon.co.uk. Put on this line;

`ADD worms`

If you're not on CU Amiga's mailing list still, substitute 'worms' for 'cu-announce' for our announce only group or 'cu-amiga' for the discussion list. For further instructions send;

`HELP`

to listserv@cuamiga.demon.co.uk. Codes for amazing screens, worm name ideas , locations of custom maps, hint, tips, cheats and tactics will be the order of the day. Team 17 are also present. Just before going to press they revealed that they have dropped plans to create *'Net Worms'* on the Amiga. The reason given is a lack of interest on the part of the Amiga community. Prove them wrong and E-Mail your thoughts to spadge@team17.com now!



Blitz Basic newsgroup

New and potential programmers using Acid Software's *Blitz Basic* 2, should know that there's a Usenet Newsgroup dedicated to *Blitz Basic* support. Add 'alt.sys.amiga.blitz' to your Newsgroups file to get on to to the Blitz Newsgroup. *Blitz Basic 2.1* is reviewed in this issue so if you've any further questions or if you already use *Blitz Basic*, this would be the ideal place to converse with other users. The authors can also be found in this group to raise any support/future version issues etc. Recently Mark Sibly announced that after his next (unnamed) game, he'll be setting to work on *Blitz Basic 3*. This started a massive thread about what existing *Blitz Basic* users would like to see in *BB 3*. Join up and you can have your say too. ■

Barnet censorship free

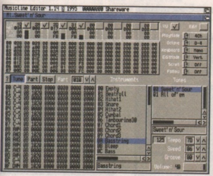
Fidonet, the pre-Internet network that is passed around BBSs via direct calls, has always maintained a clean image. Unlike the Internet, every conference is 'moderated' and generally speaking, swearing and other culturally sensitive behaviour is banned and use of this can see any individual removed from the network. Fidonet possesses many Amiga conferences and so remained quite a valuable resource. However, many Amiga hobbyists felt stifled by the rules and so set up an alternative network that really is 'anything goes' including aliases instead of real names. Called the 'Barnet', you can gain access to it from a number of supporting BBSes. Some of which include;

BBS	Location	SysOp	Phone number
SlimeLiteBBS	London	The Landlord	0181-230-1566
Backyard BBS	Harrow	Xerra	0181-424-2065
Darkside	London	Darkman	0181-771-9100
Frost Free	Slaithwaite	Knocker	01484-842-341
Beachy Head	Eastbourne	Wynny the Poo	01323-520-999

Sound Lab

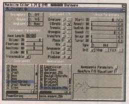
This month Tony Horgan takes a look a some of the most impressive and innovative noise-making tools to be found in the public domain.

Musicline Editor


Musicline Editor 1.14 © 1995 Shareware
Tune
Part
Stop
Instruments
Tunes
Sweet'n'Sour
All of'em
Empty
Beatfull
Hihat1
Snare
Hihat2
Cymbal
Tambourine30
Chord1
Chord2
Chord3
Basstring
Bleep
Bass
Tempo
Speed
Groove
Volume

Most trackers seem to have been lacking ambition recently, content to concentrate on trying to play more tracks than the opposition, which considering the reduction in sound quality is a waste of time in my opinion. However, *Musicline Editor* injects some much-needed inspiration into the scene.

While at first it may seem like just another tracker, it stands out thanks to its unique combination of sample and synthesis playback. For years we've been able to add basic effects to samples as they played, such as vibrato and tremolo, as these just alter the replay speed and volume parameters which is simple to do. *Musicline* takes this to another level by adding synthesiser controls, including filter, resonance and phase. Instruments are made by combining standard sound samples with these and other synthesiser settings. The results can be very impressive, allowing the use of synth sounds that have filter sweeps automatically built in, so that when you play a bassline for example, each note gets progressively more spiky, then slides back down to a more muffled sound, without you having to program in loads of little changes on each note.



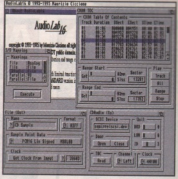
At the moment the interface is somewhere between a fixed *ProTracker*-style layout and a more OS-compliant system including standard menus and radio buttons. You can select any screen mode you have available but the actual screen doesn't re-scale accordingly, so in effect you're stuck with a (quite reasonable) 640 x 256 screen.

I haven't got to grips with the whole thing yet, but going by the demo tunes and the synth section, it has plenty of potential for anyone who is fed up of the normal constraints of tracker programming. It won't turn your Amiga into a Roland JD-800, but it's the best combination of sample and synthesis to ever grace the Amiga.

The shareware version allows saving of your own modules and instruments, but you should register if you find yourself using it on a regular basis.

Available from: Aminet 9 CD-ROM. Check the adverts in this issue for the best price and deal.

AudioLab 16


AudioLab16 © 1993-1995 Maurizio Ciccione
About AudioLab16
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I/O Mapping
Mappings
Execute
CDDA TOC
CDDA Table Of Contents
Track Duration SSect ESect STime ETime
Range Start
Range End
Get
Sector
Play
Track
All
Range
Stop
File (Out)
Name
CD Sample
Format
AIFF
Sample Point Data
PCM16 Lin Signed MSBLSB
Clock
Get Clock From Input
CDAudio (In)
SCSI Device
squirrelscsi.device
Door
Open
Close
Unit
TOC
Read
Channel
Left
44100

This one has seen plenty of service on my Amiga over the last couple of months. It's one of those ever so modern modular-designed programs that performs all kinds of useful audio feats, with ample support for many 16-bit and 8-bit audio formats.

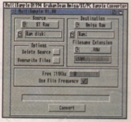
Most of the functions are disabled in the shareware release, but it does allow you to take the raw 16-bit sample data from audio CDs and save it straight out to disk (in other words you can perform a direct digital-to-digital copy from any audio CD). You'll need a CD-ROM drive that can transmit CD audio data across the SCSI bus, such as those currently sold by HiSoft and the forthcoming Q-Drive from Amiga Technologies.

Sample data from audio CDs can be automatically converted to 8 bits as it's saved, or just spooled out in full 16 bit bandwidth. This is generally the better option, as the sample volume can then be maximised using an editor (such as *Aura, OctaMED 6, MultiSample* etc) and then converted to 8 bits for use in your tracker. If you've got a 16-bit replay system on your Amiga then so much the better! The results are the cleanest samples you can possibly get from CDs.

The disabled features include a sample editor, signal generator and plenty more. There's stacks of support for 16-bit sound formats. Watch this space for a review of the fully registered version.

Available from: Aminet Set 2 CD-ROM Pack. Check the adverts in this issue for the best price and deal.

MultiSample


MultiSample ©1994 Graham Dean Amiga/ST/PC Sample Converter
MultiSample V1.00
Source
ST Raw
Ram disk:
Destination
Amiga Raw
Ram:
Filename Extension
.RAW
Options
Delete Source
Overwrite Files
Freq :11Khz
Use File Frequency
Convert

This is a sample converter, plain and simple. Those poor deluded souls who use PCs for music normally exchange samples in WAV and VOC format, slightly different to the Amiga's native IFF 8SVX format. MultiSample uses a neat little GUI interface from which you select your source and destination sample files, along with their formats and the required sample frequency. The supported formats are Amiga 8SVX (IFF), Amiga RAW, ST RAW and PC WAV. PC VOC and the 16-bit AIFF formats are absent, but they may be added with time. That's about it really!

Available from: Aminet 9 CD-ROM. Check the adverts in this issue for the best price and deal.

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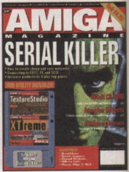

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- ON THE DISKS: TextureStudio plus Imagine objects, DVerb, Mandel 92, Bluff Titler, Amiga E source code, Xtreme Racing.
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-SOLD OUT

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- ON THE DISKS: MovieSetter, clip art and Fifa International Soccer demo. PLUS free MovieSetter manual.
- FEATURE: Animation made easy.
- INSIDE: Power CD-ROM, PD Special, ATR, Turbo Trax, Dawn Patrol, Super League Manager, Baldies preview.

MAY 1995

- ON THE DISKS: ProDraw 3 (all non AGA Amigas), OctaMED 6 and Baldies demos.
- FEATURE: Ten printers reviewed, rated and recommended.
- INSIDE: ECTS report, Brutal Preview, DPaint, Personal Paint, Photogenics and Brilliance compared.

JUNE 1995

- ON THE DISKS: Image FX 1.5 (all Amigas with 2Mb), USM demo.
- FEATURE: Image processing explained
- INSIDE: RAM speed test: Blizzard 1230 III, Siren Apollo, Octamed 6 reviewed, Primal Rage, Sensible Golf previewed.

JULY 1995

- ON THE DISKS: Adorage 2.0, Powerbasev3.4, Arcade Snoofer-full game.
- FEATURE: Step by step guide to the Net.
- INSIDE: First report from Germany on Escom, LightWave 4 previewed, Cinema 4D, Scala MM400, Virocop and TM2 reviewed.

AUGUST 1995

- ON THE DISKS: Clarissa 2.0 and exclusive demo of Cammy Vs Honda in SSF II.
- FEATURE: Trouble shooting on your Amiga
- INSIDE: DPaint 5 review, A look at the new A400/060 with CyberVision graphics, Games include Colonization, Sensible Golf, Time Keepers, Player Manager 2.

SEPTEMBER 1995

- ON THE DISKS: OctaMED 5.04, Speris Legacy, Time Keepers.
- FEATURE: Sex and computers: we take an indepth look at how much there is and what people think about it.
- INSIDE: Alien Breed 3D , Gloom, SSFII, Brutal, ViroCop A500, Base Jumpers CD32.

OCTOBER 1995

- ON THE DISKS: Pagestream 2.2, Exclusive Fears and Citadel demo.
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Please take the time to fill in the form on the right and send it to us. The encouragement you give companies and developers by letting them know you enjoyed their games will show the continuing size and strength of the Amiga market. Don't let it down! The Golden joysticks ceremony will be held in May 1996 and we'll have a report about who got what in which category in the July issue.

The Form

Please fill out this form, listing your entry in each of the seven categories below, then send it (or a photocopy of it) to the address at the bottom.

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Best arcade or film licence. Not a difficult choice since there were only two.

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- ☐ " " 3 Fam. Babes 1
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- ☐ Sherilyn Fenn (2)
- ☐ Lunatic Nudes
- ☐ Anna Nicole SM. (3)
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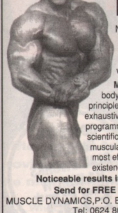

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Frequently asked questions

Getting the Amiga onto the Internet can be fraught with difficulty. CU Amiga Magazine provides some of the answers to the most common questions.

Q. What hardware do I need to get onto the Internet?

A. Apart from your Amiga, you will need a modem. The faster the better, but with an A1200 a 'V34' 28800 bits per second rated modem is best. Slower Amigas (A500, A600, A12000s) which only have 68000 processors have some problems with anything faster than a 14.4K modem. A hard drive and extra memory are extremely useful too, although if you're prepared to cope with a little bit of hardship and donkey work, it is possible to do without.

Q. What software do I need?

A. That depends. There are two main ways to get on the Internet:either through an Internet Service Provider (such as Demon) or through an existing on-line service. The second way is much, much simpler as all the hard work with protocols is handled by the service provider: All you then need is a terminal emulator package such as *NComm*, *Term* or Hi-Soft's *Termite*.

Q. What is AmiTCP?

A. If you want to get onto the Internet properly in the most flexible way, you will need what is called a TCP/IP stack. TCP/IP is the protocol used on the Internet and the *AmiTCP* package is an implementation for the Amiga. Many programs have been written to take advantage of *AmiTCP* and will provide you with World Wide Web browsers, Gopher and Internet Relay Chat (IRC) clients and mail programs.

Q. Where can I get AmiTCP?

A. You can either buy the full version from Blittersoft and attempt to plug in the extras yourself or preferably obtain the demo version 3.0 or 4.0 (with an annoying requestor) in a ready made 'installer' archive which will do 90% of the hard work for you. You can get one such archive from Visage PD on 0115-964-2828. This particular installer may be Demon specific but it'll provide a working example unlike installing *AmiTCP* from scratch. Installation will be much harder for providers not offering 'static IP' and 'SMTP mail'. It might be an idea to bear this in mind if you choose to use someone other than Demon.

Q. How do I set up AmiTCP?

A. With great difficulty if not using one of the 'Installer' archives. *AmiTCP* is not a program for the beginner. However the latest commercial version 4.2 is an improvement if you really want to pay for it and set it up yourself. As above, you can get version 3.0/4.0 in a ready made archive and this is what we recommend. To set up you will need to have your User and Domain names, your IP number and the IP number of the gateway and Domain Name Servers. See, I told you it was tough. Your service provider will be able to provide all the details, although don't expect them to be able to help you with *AmiTCP* itself.

Q. Once I have installed AmiTCP, will I be ready to go?

A. No, I'm afraid not. Although you have the TCP/IP working, there are many other stages to go through if you didn't use one of the 'Installer' archives. First pf all you will need a dialing program that will call into the service provider and start the TCP/IP business going. Once you are connected, you can get a mail program, a WWW program, a Usenet news program, an Internet Relay Chat program (Chatline for surfers) and so on ...

Q. So what does AmiTCP come with?

A. You should get enough to get you started, with a dialer program and utilities including an FTP program (for downloading software) and a Telnet client (for logging into remote computers). With FTP you can load into the Aminet site and download all the other software you need.

Q. What is SLIP and PPP?

A. SLIP and PPP are two different standards for dial in programs: you can use one or the other, but not both. *AmiTCP* seems happiest to use SLIP, as this is what it comes with although PPP programs are available (from *AmiNet*).

Q. If I use a on-line service provider and therefore avoid having to use TCP/IP, what are the drawbacks?

A. If you want to get on to the Internet as easily as possible you should consider opening an account with CIX or Delphi, as both offer access using normal terminal software.The disadvantages are the extra charges associated with using the Internet in this way – rather than the monthly flat rate levied by an Internet Provider. Also, being totally text based means it's not possible to use a graphical Web browser such as *AMosaic*, or *AmiTCP* dependent tools such as the Grapevine IRC client.

Q. Is eventually getting onto the Internet worth the hassle?

A. Definitely! Not only will you be able to download all the latest software, but also you can send email to friends, join in with global discussion groups and look through thousands of pages of up to the minute news and reviews. There is an enormous on-line culture, which you could join.

Q. I have got AmiTCP working, but when I run AMosaic I can't get any pictures displayed.

A. Web pages contain images in GIF format (and sometimes JPG) which the Amiga can't decode out of the box. In order to display these pictures, you need to install a GIF and JPG datatype which the Amiga uses to translate the pictures. They're available by download from the AmiNet sites;
util/dtype/ZGIFDT39.16.lha
util/dtype/jfif_dtc.lha

Q. After installing AmiTCP, I get an error message "rx unknown command" when dialing into the Internet. Why?

A. The command "link up" command used to access the internet makes use of ARexx, and if you don't have ARexx installed and running, you'll get an error message like this. Make sure the drawer Rexxc is present on your Workbench system (copy over from the distribution disks if not) and add the line;
run >nil: <nil: to your s:user-startup file. ■

John Kennedy

Masterclass

So you want to know what this ARexx thing we keep talking about actually is? You're in luck – MasterClass explains all.

In the last few months we have developed some programs in the wonderful programming language *ARexx*. Unfortunately, from first hand experience I've discovered that quite a few users aren't exactly sure what this *ARexx* business is – or how to go about using it.

ARexx is a programming language that is distributed as part of the Workbench (at least, part of Workbench 2.04 and later releases). Unfortunately, *ARexx* documentation is hard to come by: in fact, unless you have an A4000 you are unlikely to have ever seen the official Commodore booklet.

This month's MasterClass is especially aimed at those users who are struggling to use *ARexx* or would-be Amiga programmers eager to achieve something new with their existing system.

To start with, it is important to realise what *ARexx* is designed to do well and what it does badly. One immediate strength is that it is free: most users should already have it on their system. However, *ARexx* is no Blitz Basic or C development system. It's an interpreted language and it is not designed to be the fastest. You won't be able to use it to write killer arcade games or professional utilities.

ARexx is a more thoughtful language, and its strengths are its many powerful commands, its ease of use and its ability to make debugging simple. *ARexx* can also be used to add functionality to existing programs: any application which has an "ARexx Port" effectively makes its functions available to external control. For example, you could use *ARexx* to add complex macro facilities to your *Cygnus Ed* text editor, or to link an image processing program such as The *Art Department Professional* with software controlling a video digitiser such as VLab.

Good and Bad

What ARexx is good at:

- **Learning to program**
- **Text processing**
- **File utilities**
- **Linking existing applications**
- **Adding extra functions to existing applications**
- **Creating intelligent batch files**

What ARexx is bad at:

- **Arcade or action games**
- **Stand alone applications**
- **Extremely large programs**
- **Programs which require fast execution speeds**
- **Programs which make extensive use of graphics or sound**

Starting ARexx

Open a Shell window and enter RX and return. If you see the following:

```
Usage:  rx filename [arguments]
```

then the good news is that ARexx is alive and kicking on your system. If you see something like:

```
rx: Unknown command
```

then there is a very strong chance that *ARexx* is not running or is not installed. To install *ARexx*, you will need to find your original Workbench disks (or have a good look on your hard drive) and locate a program called *RexxMast*. This is the program which executes the *ARexx* programs. Now you can make a decision: do you want *ARexx* to start every time you re-boot, or can you remember to start it manually?

If you can live with a manual set-up, simply double-click on the *ARexx* icon or open a Shell and type:

```
run >nil: <nil: RexxMast
```

To run *ARexx* automatically every time you switch on (which isn't a bad idea unless you are severely challenged in terms of disk space and memory) you should drag the icon over the WBStartup drawer. Next open a shell and enter:

▲ The RexxMast Icon in all its glory. You can run the ARexx server by simply double clicking on it. However, it's much more useful to insert it in the user star-up.

```
ed s:user-startup
```

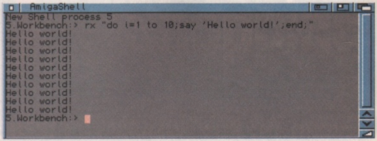
Depending on whether this file already exists or not, you will either have a blank screen or a list of previously entered commands (many programs will add their own commands to the user-startup script, so don't be surprised).

Add the following to the user-startup script and save the file.

```
run >nil: <nil: RexxMast
```

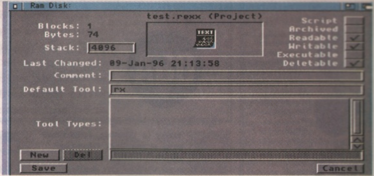
If you are using the standard Ed editor, you can save the file by pressing ESC, then X and then return. You will now need to re-boot to get *RexxMast* started and you should be greeted with what you can see in the screengrab at the top of this column.

This might not be the end of the matter though: if you still get the unknown command error when entering "RX" you will need to check that the directory called "Rexxc" is on your Workbench disk. This directory contains various special *ARexx* commands, including "RX". If it isn't present have a hunt on your



```
New Shell process 5
5.Workbench:> rx "do i=1 to 10;say 'Hello world!';end;"
Hello world!
Hello world!
Hello world!
Hello world!
Hello world!
Hello world!
Hello world!
Hello world!
Hello world!
Hello world!
5.Workbench:>
```

▲ Within the AmigaShell we find a very clichéd example program showing the use of the rx command to run a simple loop. You should be able to come up with something a little more adventurous than this. And remember ... loop programs which print your name are very sad indeed!



Blocks: 1
Bytes: 74
Stack: 4096
Last Changed: 09-Jan-96 21:13:58
Comment:
Default Tool: rx
Tool Types:

▲ By changing the default tool to 'rx', the file corresponding to the icon will be executed by ARexx automatically.

original Workbench disk and copy it to your everyday Workbench disk. Something like :

```
copy df0:rexxc sys: ALL
```

should do the trick. Now when you type "RX" you shouldn't get an error. Unless, for some reason the libraries which *ARexx* requires are missing from your Workbench disks. If this happens, obtain a directory listing of the libs: drawer, and check for rexxsupport.library and rexxhost.library. If these are missing, you'll have to copy them from the original Workbench disks, like this:

```
copy df0:libs/rexx#? libs:
```

And if you can't seem to find the "#" key, then take the trouble to use the Prefs tool to set up a proper GB keymap.

Using ARexx

Now we are getting somewhere: with all the *ARexx* files installed on your system and *RexxMast* running, your Amiga is at last ready to run some programs.

ARexx programs take the form of plain text files, such as you would create with Ed or some other text editor. It is possible to use a Word Processor, but only if no extra information (font details for example) is saved with the text.

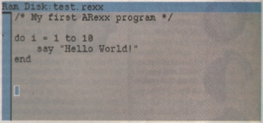
It's best to give an *ARexx* program a name which ends in .rexx, and although it's not compulsory it's a good idea as some programs assume the extension to be present. Actually executing a program can be achieved with the RX command, although RX can also be used to execute *ARexx* command directly.

Here's an example of using RX without a program. Open a Shell and enter:

```
rx "do i=1 to 10;say 'Hello
world!';end;"
```

Make sure to get the quotation marks right. You should see something like the screen shot on the preceding page.

The commands we entered between the quotation marks was a simple *ARexx* program. Now let's write it in a more usual form. Using a text editor (Ed if you must) create a file which looks like the screenshot to the right here. There are several points to notice, the most important being that the program MUST start with a comment – that is, text between the /* and */ marks. You can (and indeed should) add more text in comments throughout your program to remind you what certain parts are actually doing.



Ram Disk:test.rexx

```
/* My first ARexx program */

do i = 1 to 10
    say "Hello World!"
end
```

▲ Always remember that programs have to start with comments and that using them wisely throughout larger programs will allow you to go back to code later and not have to work out what it's doing.

Secondly, notice how we can now space everything a little better, and even indent the inside of the loop. This makes the program a lot easier to read, and the extra spaces make no difference to the *ARexx* interpreter.

Now save the program to Ram disk with a name such as "test.rexx". You can now execute the program by returning to the Shell and simply entering:

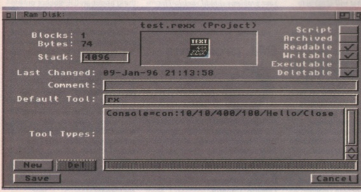
```
rx ram:test
```

Notice how you can leave off the ".rexx" part with RX. If your text editor has an option to do so, then save the program with an Icon. If there is no option, use *IconEdit* in order to create one: make it a Project icon. Select the icon, check its Info file (highlight the icon with a single click) and then use the Workbench menu option Icons/Information. You can now alter the default tool to read RX. Then when you save the changes and double-click on the Icon the program will be executed by *ARexx* automatically. There's an example at the top of this column.

It's also possible to add a ToolType to the icons info file. For example in the screenshot just below left, by adding a Console tooltype you can pre-define the shape of the Window and add a Close gadget.. ■

Email John at johnk@infosys2.thegap.com or Fidonet 2:443/13.4 and tell him what you want.

Next month ... who knows. More ARexx? More AmigaDOS?



Blocks: 1
Bytes: 74
Stack: 4096
Last Changed: 09-Jan-96 21:13:58
Comment:
Default Tool: rx
Tool Types: Console=con:10/10/400/100/Hello/Close

▲ If you have enough memory it is useful to have ARexx running in the background all the time.

The ARexx Programs

There are several more programs in the Rexxc directory. Some of the more useful are:

REXXMAST	**The master ARexx program**
RX	**Run an ARexx program**
RXC	**Close all ARexx programs and RexxMast**
HI	**Halt all scripts Immediately**
TS	**Start Trace mode (try it and see!)**
TE	**End Trace mode**

Logos, meanings and mysteries:

CD ROM	CD32 queries, ParNET and various other CD ROM-related problems.
EXPANSION	All about upgrading RAM, operating systems and processors.
ACCESSORIES	Plug-in hardware of any kind: scanners, disk drives etc.
PROGRAMS	Answers to queries on particular pieces of software.
SOUND	Music, sampling, MIDI and anything that makes a loud noise.
UTILITIES	Miscellaneous tools to keep your Amiga running smoothly.
PRINTERS	Form-feeds, page-breaks, preferences and lots, lots more!
MONITORS	Monitors, TVs, modulators, screen-modes and all that stuff.
GRAPHICS	Pixels, sprites, animation, pictures. In one small word: graphics.
BUSINESS	Spreadsheets, databases, organisers, accounts ...
COMMS	Everything you need answering about the internet
HELP	Not everything fits into a pigeonhole, but anything you like fits in here.

Q&A

Is your Amiga limping along like a monoped in a large tub of Smarties? If you're having memory mayhem, nasty rumblings with your RAM or any problems to do with your Amiga we can help. Write to us with your problem, hardware spec and memory size and we'll fix it!

Tony is young, talented and a master blaster when it comes to sound and vision on Amiga.

The Antipodean antidote to your problems is back with his brain smoking from the latest Q&A session.

Mixed memory

I have an Amiga 1200 with 2Mb of Chip and 1Mb of Fast RAM. I've tried to run your excellent Imagine 3.0 cover disk but it just quits with no further activity. SnoopDOS reports that Imagine can't find the FC24 library. Is it at all possible that you forgot to include this library and that it wont run without it? My machine has all of the requirements you stated would be needed to run the program on January issue disk.

Anthony Brice,
Pizza, Harrow.

Firstly, we are quite pleased to say that we have received a number of queries about Imagine asking for this library. It's good to see so many Amiga users getting out the diagnostic tools when something doesn't work. In this case, the FC24 library is actually a support library for an obscure graphics board called the Fire Cracker 24. Imagine does not need this to run, it just has some built in support for this device. 90% of the problems that will cause it to exit without firing up are due to a lack of memory. Yes even on machines that do have 3Mb as stated on the cover disk requirements, problems can be had. It needs this much space of continuous memory of which a machine with 2Mb chip + 1Mb fast RAM does not have. The amount of memory available on such a configuration will make Imagine virtually unusable on a system at any rate. Memory is the unfortunate penalty incurred by rendering packages. If you're serious about 3D rendering you should really invest in some kind of accelerator with at least 4Mb of Fast RAM onboard. Hopefully this will help you unlock the full potential of both Imagine and your Amiga.

Devilishly fast

What's wrong with my CyberStorm 68060 accelerator? Every time I run programs that require the FPU, they fail and I get a software failure. I tried to run the FPU version of Imagine 3 supplied with your Christmas issue and I got the same result. When I run the integer version, everything works fine. Any idea what could be causing my problems?

Ole Hagugland,
Drammen, Norway.

If all programs requiring an FPU fail on your Cyberstorm we have a pretty good idea of what's up. Firstly, the Cyberstorm has two libraries that need to be dropped into your libs: directory: a 68040.library and a 68060.library. You may have mistakenly thought that the 68040 library isn't required since you have a 68060 accelerator. It's a much smaller 68040 library that simply refers calls to the 68060 library. Ensure you have both of these libraries supplied with your Cyberstorm installed and your problems should vanish. The FPU version of Imagine will run very quickly indeed on the Cyberstorm. You lucky devil you.

PAL problems

I have an Amiga 2000 upgraded to Kickstart 3.1 coupled with a CSA Derringer 68030 accelerator with 4Mb etc. When loading Imagine 3.0 from your cover disk, I get 'You have an incorrect NTSC/PAL version of Imagine'. I was really looking forward to running this program, Please help.

Domingos Pereira
Ontario, Canada.

We neglected to mention that NTSC Amiga owners need to boot in PAL mode to get Imagine to work since we cover mounted the PAL version. Fortunately, Kickstart 2.x will allow you to boot in PAL mode. Simply enter the early startup screen by resetting and holding down both mouse buttons, then press a key. You'll see the screen contract and expand for each key press. The expanded screen is PAL which will appear to flicker more but has more lines. Click on Boot as normal (after adjusting your monitor to fit the screen etc) and then run Imagine 3.0. Users of Kickstarts earlier than 2.x must use some form of degrader available from most PD houses.

Read me!!

I want to ask you some questions;
1) Is I.C.S.'s A600/A1200 Multimedia Tower worth buying? If it is, how do I connect it to my computer? When you reviewed it in October 95 issue it was shown connected to an A1200 by its PCMCIA slot but you said something about an IDE socket on the A1200's motherboard.
2) Is there any way that I could put a password on my Workbench disk by editing the startup-sequence on my Workbench disk?

Please print this letter, it's the forth time I've written to you.

Andrew Quinn
Manchester.

The reason we haven't answered your letters is that you don't appear to read the magazine that we painstakingly put together each month! Most of your first question is answered by the review. As for the question of whether it's worth buying, surely that depends on your own circumstances.

Yes, it plugs into the IDE socket

on the motherboard (the IDE hard drive socket). A ribbon from the IDE interface is passed through the side of the Amiga's casing and into the tower, that's why it looks like it's connected via the PCMCIA, but it's not.

As for your second question, why password protect your Workbench floppy? You could just hide the disk and anyone could boot your Amiga with another Workbench disk anyway. If you really want a program to do it, check the adverts from the PD houses in this issue for a hard drive protection tool which may function for a floppy Workbench.

Swansong

I own an Amiga A600 with an 80Mb hard drive and 2Mb of RAM utilising the trapdoor slot for 1Mb. I run Bars & Pipes Pro V2.5 to control my MIDI devices. My problem is that my songs are getting longer so running out of memory is becoming evermore likely. How can I upgrade to a higher RAM configuration? Could I use the PCMCIA slot? Are there any alternatives? Also, my real time clock on my RAM card has stopped. I assume it's the battery, can I replace it?

D.S.Moris,
Hounslow, Middlesex.

You can indeed use PCMCIA memory with the A600. This is generally available in 2Mb and 4Mb units though it's a little expensive. There's also the new Apollo 620 accelerator which will accept up to an 8Mb SIMM on board as well as seriously speeding up your trusty A600. It's very tricky to install so if you're interested it may be worth getting it fitted by the supplier. Of course, these problems wouldn't be an issue if you traded in your A600 for a brand new A1200 – you could even drop your hard drive straight into the A1200. The decision is yours.

As for the clock failing in your RAM expansion; most memory cards recharge the battery themselves. It possible yours is not a rechargeable unit though, which we have seen before. Take it to a watch repair shop and they should be able to tell you and replace the battery if it's faulty or flat.

Multi-palette

I have ImageFX 1.5 installed on the hard drive of my Viper II equipped 6Mb A1200. I'm having trouble with rendering sequences as when I load them into DPaint 4 AGA and try to make an animation, the colours seem to cycle and the quality is very very poor. I have tried saving the files in many different formats but the quality is the same. Do I need a graphics card (and hence a big-box Amiga) or is it the way I am saving the pictures out? Please help.

It sounds as if you are saving animation sequences that use a different palette for each frame. Check that the Lock Palette tick box is set. Deluxe Paint 4 will not replay (or create) animations with multiple palettes, but DPaint 5, Brilliance and Personal Paint will do the job. If you still end up with multiple palette animations (if the colours seem to be cycling) then it's advisable that you use one of these programs to edit and replay them.

Dodgy disc duo

I recently bought a 3.5" hard drive, having taken the time to fit the unit with special cables purchased from an Amiga dealer. I phoned the firm I bought the drive from who said 3.5" drives over 500Mb can only be recognised by the 1200 through a warm reset. They also refused to refund money. I boot the machine with a normal Workbench disk but my machine keeps crashing and I'm taking advice on what to do next. Could I sell it to a PC owner? Can I also use PC CD-ROMs, modems and RAM SIMMS on an A1200?

B.A.Sab
London.

Firstly, the firm you bought the drive from seems to know nothing about the Amiga. The 1200 can boot any size of IDE hard drive currently available as it doesn't have the horrible limitations that MS-DOS imposes on the PC. The problem is that your hard drive isn't 'prepped' properly - a good reason for buying a drive from an Amiga dealer who pre-preps drives and charges a little more. This can save a lot of hassle if you don't know how to prep a hard drive yourself. You do have everything you need to prep the drive with HD Toolbox or you could try some better software such as RD Prep, available from many PD Houses. Once prepped, you need to install Workbench onto the hard drive. The easiest way is to simply copy the entire contents of your Workbench floppy onto the first partition you make. I recommend that you get RD Prep as it has extensive on-line help which will show you step-by-step, how to prep your hard drive, partition it and set the right boot priorities etc.

As for the crashes, another common problem with 3.5" hard drives is the power they consume. It's possible that you are drawing more power than the ridiculously under specced A1200 power supply can provide. A Datel Goliath may be needed to solve that problem.

Apollo landing

I am just writing to ask a few questions about the new Apollo 620 for the Amiga 600 which was in the January 96 issue. Could you please tell me if the Apollo 620 will get in the way of the internal hard drive which I have had free with my A600. If it does, what should I do? My last question is could you explain in more detail how the switch you mentioned should be installed.

Malcolm Campbell
Deckham, Gateshead.

The Apollo 620 doesn't get in the way of the hard drive but installation is very tricky so unless you're quite a handy man, I wouldn't attempt to fit it yourself. This also goes for the switch we mentioned. To fit it is a matter of buying a switch from Tandy and wiring the pads up to the jumpers on the 620 card. A hole needs to be drilled in the case, the switch poked through and then screwed back together. If you can't work out how to wire the switch up to the card, you shouldn't attempt to do it at all.

Speed Freak

1. Why does SysInfo tell me my system is running at 15.2MHz and 1.35 MIPS when on a previous A1200 on the same setup I got 14.17MHz and 1.33 MIPS?
2. I have raised enough money to purchase an accelerator and I am thinking of buying the well praised Blizzard 1230 IV with 16Mb of RAM. Do I have to worry about it clashing with my Overdrive HD?
3. Could I use a normal PC tower case instead of the very expensive MicroniK tower case and if so could I purchase the Zorro cards, connectors, etc. separately? Would this be cheaper?
4 Are there plans for a Zorro III expansion card for the A1200?
5. Is it possible to attach a 24 Bit Graphics Board via a SCSI II interface?
6. Does the Sony Playstation really do 500 MIPS? If so why didn't Sony use this technology wisely and put it to some good use to make a computer rather than an expensive toy.

Moynul Ahmed,
Sparkhill, Birmingham.

1. Sysinfo isn't very accurate. It uses the display Hz to measure the speed of the machine. Change the screen mode or even Overscan settings and it's put out of whack. Try a proper benchmarking tool like AIBB 6.5.
2. The Blizzard is fine at 8Mb but we couldn't confirm if it was OK at 16Mb. The best bet is to check with Gordon Harwoods that you may return the unit if it does cause problems with your existing set-up - they should oblige as they have an excellent customer service record.
3. Yes and no. You'll have to take the motherboard out of the case and fit it in the tower with wrongly positioned mounting fittings. Also the rear won't have the holes punched for the Amigas ports. Zorro cards don't easily connect to the A1200. The real nuts and bolts of the MicroniK tower is the Zorro break out board. This complicated expansion board gives you Zorro slots from the trapdoor port. However, we've heard of some enthusiasts fitting their motherboards into PC cases but doing so lands you firmly on your own.
4. Yes, there's a tower from Eagle Computer Systems in Germany. We're trying to organise a UK distributor and obtain a review item. Keep an eye out on future CU issues.
5. No. There's no 'real' graphics board option for the A1200. See Mat Bettinson's points of view on page 120. Some display enhancers use the RGB port only for various degrees of success like Power Computing's 18-bit Video DAC.
6. No, it does not. It has a fairly moderate CPU (33Mhz RS3000) that accelerated Amigas can comfortably outpace. It does have next generation custom 3D hardware. The kind of thing that should be present in the new Power Amiga range. Then the Amiga will have that kind of power without Sony's overzealous control of the platform and it's software. ■

NO SAES PLEASE

We regret that we cannot respond to readers' queries by post or over the phone. Please do not include stamped addressed envelopes with your letters, as we simply don't have time to answer the thousands we receive. Responses are only possible through the pages of the magazine.

Backchat

To join our readers' forum write to Backchat,
CU Amiga Magazine, EMAP Images,
30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Get a spine!

It saddens me to read such letters as Michael Smithson's blaming Amiga owners for the potential demise of the machine, and asking us to plead with software publishers to support the Amiga. If they want to sell software to this format they will, but most have made clear their future intentions. I, for one, am not in the habit of begging to anyone, least of all large profit making organisations. Get a spine, Michael!

As far as CU Amiga Magazine goes, I would like to see more space in your magazine devoted to looking at what the average Amiga user has, what they use it for and what they are looking for in the future. Get honest debate going, expand the Backchat pages and stop reviewing games at 80-90% just because there is nothing else around.

Let's continue to enjoy our Amigas for what they are: the only decent machine for ordinary people, irrespective of income, who want more than a console.

PS. Can I have my own column?

The Grump, Alba.

No you can't have your own column but if you seriously think you have an article that's worth publishing in CU Amiga Magazine, send it to The Editor in ASCII text format accompanied by a hard copy printout and a covering letter.

Letter of the month

I am writing in reply to Martjin from the Netherlands who complains in the February 1996 edition of CU Amiga about cover disks on computer magazines. I accept his point that the magazine would be cheaper without the cover disks but this is only one point of view – it could equally be said that the small extra cost is well worthwhile since it gives Amiga users a chance to try out programs that one might or might not buy. Program reviews are all very well but there is no substitute for trying out a program yourself before deciding whether to buy the full version – certainly if the full price is a lot more than the cost of a cover disk.

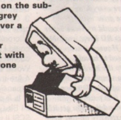
I paid over £200 for the full version of *PageStream 2.2* (which the graphics here are done with)– now it is on a cover disk. I might take the point of view that I have wasted £200 buying a program that I could have got virtually for free, but I have had several years use out of it and now I am guaranteed that it will continue to be well supported because lots more people have become *PageStream* owners as a result of the special cover disk upgrade offers. Cover disks of old programs give a good introduction to the latest version – if sometimes you have to put programs on the disks that don't appeal to everyone that just shows that Commodore's demise has greatly decreased the number of programs available – Escom will sort that out.

Please keep the cover disks, they encourage people to buy the Amiga and support those who already have.

Now a quick gripe of my own. I'm a computer hobbyist but I got the vote more years ago than I care to remember. The eyesight's fading and the hearing's about gone. Please ask your advertisers to print their copy in slightly larger than 0.01 print so I can read it. And whilst I'm on the subject, who decides that it is a good idea to print dark grey text on a medium grey background or tiny lettering over a surrealist multi coloured, multi coloured landscape background. Surely your advertisers want to sell their wares? Some of them act as if they can't bear to part with their goodies and make it virtually impossible for anyone with other than perfect vision to read their adverts.

Congratulations all round on producing the best magazine available.

Mr JRL Smith, Leicester.



Dirty tricks

Why do you insist on using dirty tricks to sell your magazine? I'm referring to the 'free' gifts you stick to the front of every issue in a shameless attempt to bolster the sales figures. For example, there was the Aminet CD-ROM last year, the Amiga E programming language and guide book, not to mention the excessive three-disk January issue that came with *Imagine 3*. Is your magazine so deficient that it really needs these sweeteners to shift it off the shelves each month? Personally I think the content of your magazine is enough incentive to buy each month.

Phillip Dugdale, Hants.

Yes, you're right, these are blatant attempts to sell more magazines. They work on the principle that if we offer a bigger and better overall package, more people will want to buy the magazine. Disgusting, isn't it?

On yer bike

Here we go again. Upgrade or die, I've already done that ... several times. From a C64 to an A500 1.3, A500 with WB1.3/2.0 ROM sharer, A1200 2Mb, A1200 plus 2Mb hawk board, 85Mb HD then 240Mb with 2Mb on board. After all this I now have 6Mb RAM in total. I've even got a CD-ROM drive now and a printer and a monitor. Whatever next?

Now I need an FPU to run a flaming cover disk. On yer bike: do you think I'm made of money? *Texture Studio*'s no good to me, unless you've got a spare FPU lying about the office. I suspect that it's not a lot of good to a lot of other people either. I shall have to take a closer look at magazine cover disks from now on before I decide to buy the mag. Don't get me wrong, I love the Amiga, I've stuck by it through thick and thin but I've got to draw the line somewhere.

Mike Smith, Hants.

Whilst it's unfortunate that Texture Studio requires an FPU, it is essentially an add-on for

Imagine and most of Imagine's textures require an FPU. For people interested in rendering and such forth, an FPU is an essential addition to their machine. Incidentally, we included some Imagine objects (which can be used on the non FPU version), the DVerb and Mandel-92 packages and even the excellent Bluff Titler demo. None of which require an FPU. If every program on all of our cover disks had to run on every Amiga then there would be no cover disks. If you decide not to buy CU Amiga Magazine (which is more than just a cover disk) because one program wont work on your machine then perhaps you aren't sticking through as much thin as you say you are.

Stop whinging

I felt compelled to write after reading month after month about the odd one or two simple minded people who whinge on about cover disks and the like. I am currently unemployed so my attitude towards Amiga magazine publications has changed dramatically. When I was working I used to buy all the Amiga Publications as they came out (Amiga Power, Amiga Action, Amiga Computing, Amiga Shopper, Amiga User International, Amiga Format, CU Amiga and The One). Obviously becoming one of Major's millions has forced me to rethink my strategy on this front. It didn't take much thought though because of the shear variety of subjects within your magazine, from the latest news and reviews to cover features, from Get Serious to Workshop and the highly informative Q&A section, what more could an enthusiast want? And on top of all this comes ... *Imagine 3.0. Amiga E, PageStream 2.2, MovieSetter, ComicSetter, ProDraw 3, Scala* not to mention a lot more on your cover disks. OK so you get the time limited demos, ie the *Virtual Karting* cover disk, as well but the 'try before you buy' option suits me fine.

However, I was happily tinkering away at my keyboard using *Transition*, an excellent utility thinking wow, fantastic, now I can download some clip art from the PCs I am forced to use at college. But when I went to find out what disk number and issue did I got it from, I discovered that it was from another magazine. Why did you miss this gem of software?

Mr EC Wood, Cleveland.

Thanks for all the praise Mr Wood. However, due to our policy of putting top quality software on our cover disks we have to decide what we think is the best package to go on. Sometimes this means that other software is left off our disks and may appear on another magazines. That's life.

Xtreme blobs?

I have one question about your last cover disk *Xtreme Racing*. I like the game but there is one thing I can't work out. What are the red things that move about when you are racing. please answer the question, I'm sure I'm not the only one who doesn't know what they are.

Martin Jerome
Waterlooville, Hants.

Martin, Martin, Martin, where's your sense of Christmas cheer? Those little red things are cheeky, cheery Santas wandering around in the snow trying to avoid being run over before the Christmas rush.

BBS BA BA

A young Russell Pierce has been bombarding the office with calls in a desperate attempt to get his bulletin board number published. OK Russell you've finally worn us down. We don't normally publish BBS number as a rule but here goes. The Pigeon Coup BBS provides help on Amiga technical queries and internet access software, it can be contacted on 01559 384 634, sysop is Tony. Note: other readers do not attempt the Pierce method of persistency otherwise we may be forced to come round your house and set fire to your collection of stuffed animals. You have been warned.

BeBox rumours

I heard a rumour that the new computer platform 'BeBox' will probably be the new Amiga RISC machine that we're all waiting for. I don't know whether this rumour is true or false but if the Amiga Technologies intend to release a new Amiga model, I think they must convert some current Amiga productivity titles like *Final Writer 4, Scala MM400, Real 3D V3.0* etc to new RISC mode. Also, it would be a good idea if AT made some deals with game companies to produce RISC versions of popular A500 and A1200 titles (*Sensi World of Soccer 3D* or *Alien Breed 3D II* would be great).

Come on AT, act quickly and give us a RISC Amiga with AmigaOS V4.0 (with network and internet capabilities). Please, release the new machine before Autumn 96. Time's running out and let's face the truth – the Amiga market is getting smaller every day. Many game companies have already abandoned the Amiga games market, the same could happen to the productivity market.

Sinan Gurkan, Istanbul, Turkey.

The BeBox is actually an entirely new computer by the company Be Inc. The only connection with the Amiga is that the directors have modelled certain aspects on the Amiga and, they say, what the Amiga should be. This is obviously an attempt to poach Amiga users for the platform and with hardware specs including twin PowerPC CPUs and a very low price point, it does sound attractive. However, the machine doesn't exist and there certainly will be no software for it for a long time yet. Amiga Technologies admit they have seen the BeBox but remain committed to developing a brand new Power Amiga. Draw your own conclusions.

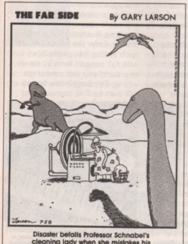
Amiga E tutorials

I was delighted to see your recent cover disk of the *Amiga E* programming language and the start of the *Amiga E* tutorial by Jason Hulance. This elegantly compiled language by Wouter van Oortmerssen gives our favourite computer yet another big lead over the competition. Jason's tutorial on EasyGUI shows how *Amiga E* gives fast seamless access to the core of our unsurpassed operating system, which achieved in 1985 what Windows 95 struggled to reach a decade later. Moreover we need only a fraction of the memory and disk space resources needed by other languages and computers.

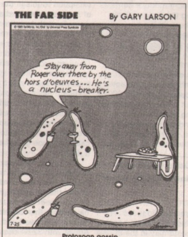
In particular the latest version of *Amiga E* includes excellent facilities for object oriented programming most ably outlined by Jason Hulance. I do not recall any serious discussion of OOP in any Amiga magazine so far. I hope that you will ask Jason to show the object oriented Programming power of Amiga E?

Brian C. Eggleston, Shropshire.

Glad you've enjoyed our tutorials. We'll pass your comments on to Jason.



Disaster befalls Professor Schnabel's cleaning lady when she mistakes his time machine for a new dryer.


THE FAR SIDE
By GARY LARSON
Stay away from Roger over there by the hors d'oeuvres... He's a nucleus-breaker.
7-25

Protozoan gossip.

Points of View

Alan Dykes

Bad News Then?

The news that Amiga Technologies is cutting back its operation in the UK is, on the face of it, bad. With product development and support almost eliminated from these shores what hope can there be for the future? Well, the press release sent to us about the World Of Amiga show in Novotel, London was clear about one thing: *'German company'* Amiga Technologies is staging it. Strange though it may seem, perhaps the very existence of a UK office was one of the reasons the Amiga hasn't been as successful as it might have been here in Britain.

> **“ Let's not fool ourselves any longer, AT GmbH (UK) was never anything more than a puppet theatre. ”**

Let's not fool ourselves any longer, Amiga Technologies GmbH (UK) was never anything more than a puppet theatre. Jonathon Anderson set up the Amiga Magic deal and John Smith sold machines as hard as humanly possible into retail and distribution, but they were ultimately hamstrung by lack of any real control. You can have ideas galore and work hard but unless you actually control the budgets and the decisions that globally effect the Amiga, you cannot claim success. Benshiem is the real nerve centre and the relaunch of the Amiga has been more successful and universally accepted in Germany than it has been here as a result.

Commodore UK was a large independent company, part of the global network of a multinational. Amiga Technologies UK was merely a regional branch office. So the job cuts may not be such bad news then (for us, but spare a thought for Jonathon and co), if they mean that Benshiem sits up, takes notice and has a direct hand in the action here in the UK. If sales don't go well then there will be no-one to blame but themselves, and this could mean that the savings they make on UK salaries goes into the promotional budget to make sure this doesn't happen.

Perhaps with their hands directly on the reins Amiga Technologies GmbH will take this once great Amiga market seriously again. Let's hope so.

AMIGA

Tony Horgan

Sound Decisions

The Amiga is probably going to go through two main changes within the next year or so. First will be the 'A1200 Plus' or whatever it's called (an A1200 with extra RAM and a faster processor), while the next step will be the Power Amiga. As plans for the 'Plus' will now be set in stone at AT, let's jump forward to the Power Amiga.

> **“ Even though the Amiga's current audio hardware is outdated, at least the software available really does drive it to its limits. ”**

Educated guesses suggest that this will be something similar to the Draco from MacroSystem: a modular computer running the Amiga operating system but without the custom Amiga chips. System-legal software that doesn't call directly upon the audio and graphics hardware (sprites, internal samples etc) works fine because everything is re-directed to the appropriate graphics cards, output ports and so on by the operating system.

This sounds all very logical and sensible, as the user could then stock the computer with all the hardware specific to his needs, and upgrade when necessary, as is customary in the PC market. However, illogical as it may seem, I would like to see an exception to this in the form of some standardised audio hardware. Even though the Amiga's current audio hardware is outdated, at least the software available really does drive it to its limits, to such an extent that it can compete with far more technically advanced audio hardware. Compare this to the chicken and egg situation of third party sound cards and their software. With too many standards for programmers to master and cater for, none gets the support it deserves.

My advice to Amiga Technologies is: buy in some ready made audio hardware from one of the Japanese giants such as Yamaha or Roland (it's got to be cheaper than developing and making your own) and give us an Amiga with 32-64 channels of 16-bit stereo digital audio playback, with a DSP and analogue-digital-analogue converters to boot, stick on a couple of MIDI ports and you'll clear up in the booming music and multimedia market. Offer the world a system such as this 'out of the box' with full support from all developers and you just cannot go wrong. Once again the Amiga will then be THE computer for audio-visual applications.

▲ **Stock the Power Amiga with some 'off the shelf' professional audio hardware bought from Roland or Yamaha, and it would become the industry standard computer in the music and multimedia fields.**

Andy Leaning

Just the Business

The other day I was lucky enough to be asked to advise a group of business people about how they could use computing technology to enhance their businesses. During the lecture one of them, I'll refer to him as Dave, asked if it would be possible to use his son's home computer in his business (he owned a small off-license).

Now the course I'd chosen to give, although using PCs as examples, was designed to show how any computer technology – as opposed to a specific type – could be used so I was more than pleased to take a few minutes out of my talk and try and assist Dave in using his son's computer.

As it happens the computer in question was an Amiga, an A2000 and although his son had a copy of SoftWood's *PenPal* word processor he had little else.

Dave was very surprised to learn that there were quite a few good business programs he could use on it and even more surprised and delighted when I told him their prices. While PC software prices are falling, it's still hard to get really good titles as cheaply as they are available on the Amiga.

This set me thinking, that if I'd met Dave this time last year I would have been very hard pressed to come up with an similar number of business programs but now I was able to tell him about *EasyLedger*, *FinalCalc*, *FinalWriter* and *WordWorth*, *DataStore*, *Twist* and even *ShapeShifter*.

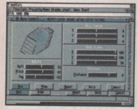
I met Dave again recently, and he told me that his son had been given a PlayStation and so he now using the Amiga for his accounts, creating posters for his shop window and as a catalogue for the video library he's running from the store.

What's the point behind all this talk about a man called Dave and his son? It simply highlights the fact that the market for Amiga business software has rarely been as strong as it is now.

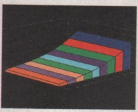
“ The Amiga may be losing its edge as a games system but it may just have found a new home amongst the thousands of small businesses who can't afford PCs. ”

The Amiga may be losing its edge as a games system but it may just have found a new home amongst the thousands of small businesses who can't afford PCs and the masses of software needed to run a business on.

My message to Amiga Technologies is as follows: tell the business community all about your product. It's great.



▲ FinalCalc; just one of the many top notch business programs that the Amiga now has.



▲ With FinalCalc you can even create fancy graphical representations of your statistics.

* * *

Mat Bettinson

A1200 Cybergraphix

The Amiga (and C= machines before it) were always central to my hobby interests. Before my heady days at CU Amiga Magazine I worked in the electronics industry where I appreciated the Amiga's advanced design and wondrous graphics and audio capability. These days my career is in the world of publishing and my favourite machine is a beefed up Amiga 3000 loaded with Zorro boards. My set up gives me something approaching modern hardware capabilities with the Amiga's brilliant operating system. This OS coupled with the brilliant array of standardised 'style guide compliant' software, is pretty much what keeps me solidly with the Amiga still. However, the mass market Amiga 1200 doesn't have such expansion capabilities. Sure there's plenty of expansion options available but there's a few vital areas where the Amiga 1200 isn't catered for. For example, the Amiga's graphics and sound capabilities were once strengths of our beloved machine but now they have now partially turned into its weaknesses. There's no 16-bit sound or 24-bit graphics cards for the Amiga 1200. Why is that? Contrary to popular opinion, it's quite possible to add such things to the A1200 and yet, amazingly, it has never been done.

Some hardware manufacturers should be wise enough to capitalise on the long wait for next generation machines and start producing some kind of mass market trapdoor fitted upgrade. This wouldn't be your usual accelerator but a graphics board to boot. Yes it is possible. A lead can run from the board to a passthrough connector plugged into the RGB port. My electronics background leads me to believe that it's definitely possible and I feel we need such a unit. It also shouldn't be too prohibitively expensive to produce and so this should keep the price down to an acceptable level.

Heck, Amiga Technologies themselves could produce this unit. It would see us nicely though the next year until the awesome PowerPC based machines debut. It might also supply them with a healthy revenue to aid the Power Amiga's development in the meantime. A graphics standard already exist so that developers can support the upgraded architecture and applications should continue to work under emulation in the future.

One final word and piece of advice to AT and hardware manufacturers: no more accelerators please. The rest of the 1200 is yearning for a power boost too.

“ No more accelerators please. The rest of the 1200 is yearning for a power boost too. ”

▲ This 24-bit image image courtesy of Texture Studio 1.1 is proof of te great graphical things the Amiga is capable of. Just imagine what the A1200 could do with a 24-bit graphics card.

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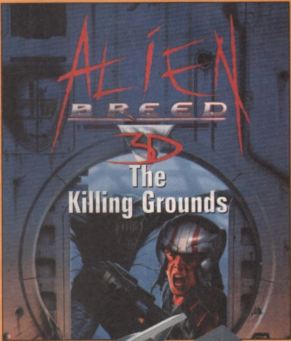
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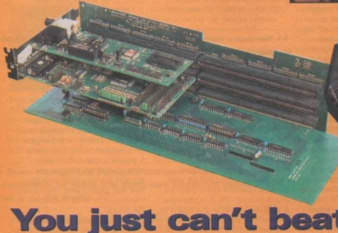

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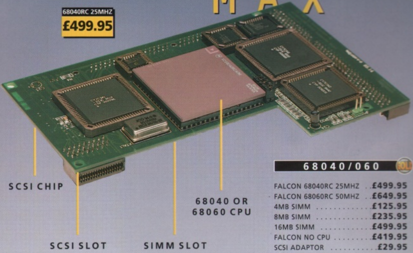

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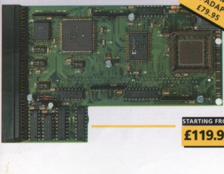

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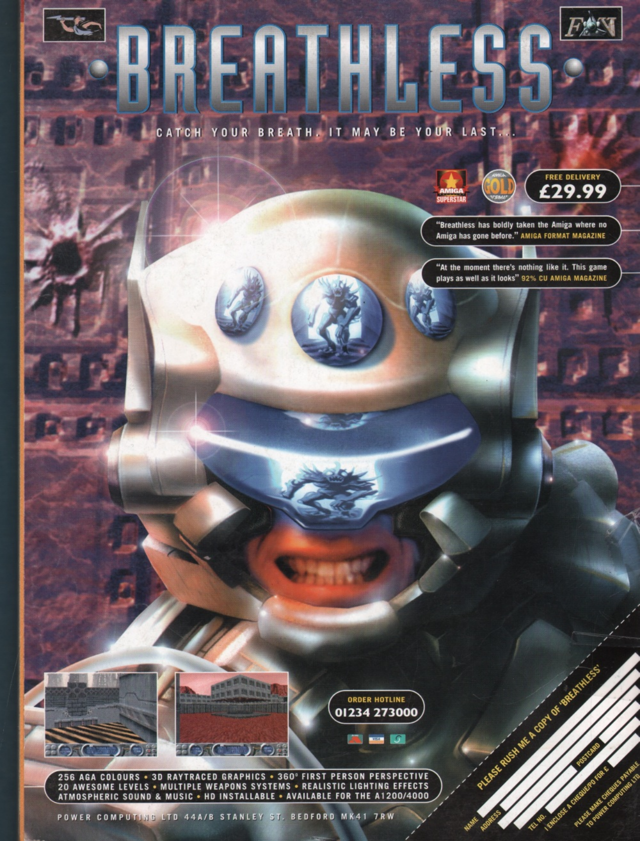

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